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Privatisation plan axed after 36 hours

Labour does rapid U-turn on Tote sale

BY RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR performed a remarkable U-turn last night when Robin Cook insisted that his party would not privatise the Tote. Only 36 hours earlier, a spokesman for Gordon Brown had floated the idea of selling the pool betting organisation for up to £500 million.

The privatisation plan, supposedly discussed by Labour frontbenchers, had the party's senior figures in turmoil yesterday. Claims and counter-claims were matched by confirmations and denials involving Tony Blair and his three most senior Shadow Cabinet members: Mr Brown, Jack Straw and Mr Cook.

In the end it was left to the Shadow Foreign Secretary — one of the keenest followers of racing in the Commons — to sort out the muddle. Choosing suitable racing parlance, Mr Cook said: "In the run up to a general election there is a rather festive atmosphere and things get out and running before the rest of us have saddled up. This is a story that should never have started and we want to stop it."

The "story" began at the weekend with reports that the Tote would be Labour's first privatisation. Charlie Whelan, spokesman for Gordon Brown, confirmed that the Shadow Chancellor would like to use the estimated proceeds of between £400 and £500 million to help to fund the party's spending plans and insisted that Mr Straw and Mr Brown had discussed the plan. "They think that given the current state of public spending there is potential to



Cook: "Story should never have started"

years has not done it, I don't think there is much scope for a Labour government, do you? We want to put a damper on this and the idea of privatisation will not be in the Labour manifesto."

Mr Cook then stepped in. "A hare appears to have got out and run before any Shadow Cabinet member knew anything about it," he said. "I can authoritatively bring down the curtain on this story. There have been no discussions in the Shadow Cabinet about the sale of the Tote. There will be no proposal by Labour to sell the Tote. The Tote's future lies in racing and not outside racing as a private company."

"I am only too aware of the important potential that Tote has for racing and I want to see racing have the chance to realise that potential."

Racing, which received £8.3 million from the Tote last year, regarded the move with bemusement. Tristram Ricketts, chief executive of the British Horseracing Board, said: "It is not as though the Tote is another nationalised industry like British Rail. The Tote has been consistently advised that the Tote, not the Government, owns the Tote, so to suggest it may be the first privatisation for a Labour government was, to say the least, rather surprising."

If the Tote were privatised it would, under European rules, almost certainly lose its monopoly and, with it, its value.

Woodrow Wyatt, page 18
Racing, page 43



Deborah Fowler with Edita, the orphaned Bosnian girl who was "irresponsibly" adopted but who will not be returned to her grandparents

Bosnia orphan may stay in Britain

BY RICHARD DUCE

A GIRL, aged four orphaned in Bosnia's civil war may stay with her British foster parents even though they were guilty of "appalling irresponsibility" in adopting her, a High Court judge ruled yesterday.

Edita Keranovic should not have her life "shattered again" by the upheaval of being returned to grandparents she did not remember, said Sir Stephen Brown, President of the Family Division. But he made plain to Alan and Deborah Fowler that Edita would remain a Keranovic and said the couple faced a "superhuman" struggle in convincing the child's family that her best interests remained in Britain.

Edita's grandfather, Hasan Keranovic, 58, said he was left distraught. "When our family was massacred in Bosnia we could somehow come to terms with that. Edita is all that remains and we cannot be together. She is our child and she belongs to us."

In his 48-page ruling on the future for Edita, the judge described how the girl was nine-weeks when Serbian troops arrived at her home village of Hrustovo in May 1992. The Muslim women and children were sent to shelter at nearby Kuzavac. "Soldiers attacked them there, and threw grenades into the garage and machine-gunned it. They perpetrated a massacre, killing more than 30 women and children. Edita's mother and her little brother, Edin, were killed, as were her maternal grandmother, two aunts and two cousins," the judge said.

Edita was pulled alive from beneath her mother's body and her plight was recorded by journalists, bringing her to the attention of Mr and Mrs Fowler. They began moves which included help from



Yugoslavian-born Lady Nott, who runs a British-based charity to assist Bosnian War casualties and is married to Sir John Nott, a former defence secretary.

Edita arrived in Britain when seven months for medical treatment. Mr Fowler, 62, a chartered accountant, and his wife, 49, adopted her at Oxford County Court but the order was set aside after investigations showed members of the child's family were refugees in Switzerland.

In the original adoption proceedings the county court was given a "wholly inaccurate and misleading" account of the circumstances in which Edita was found, Sir Stephen said, adding that the Fowlers knew

Murdered girl told of stalker

Billie-Jo Jenkins, 13, who was bludgeoned to death in the garden of her home in Hastings, had feared that she was being stalked.

She had told schoolfriends that a man was following her in the streets around her house and that an anonymous caller had telephoned the family home and hung up before speaking. A local newspaper 44 was arrested yesterday but the police emphasised that their inquiries were continuing.

Page 3

Yeltsin denial

Boris Yeltsin's wife, Naina, has added her voice to those calling for the President to resign. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* said. But Mrs Yeltsin dismissed the story, probably leaked by the Kremlin, as "baseless".

Page 12

Unionists win promises all round in censure debate

BY PHILIP WEBSTER AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

THE Ulster Unionists bargained across the floor of the Commons last night as Douglas Hogg fought to head off an attempt to dismiss him and force a vote of confidence in the Government.

The nine-strong group defended and appeared to receive "broad" support from the backbenchers of Northern Ireland in negotiations to get the European ban on British beef lifted.

Mr Hogg promised that he would accept the lifting of the ban on beef from Northern Ireland if it was expected, they qualified for such treatment ahead of herds in other parts of the United Kingdom. Proposals are likely to go to Brussels within a fortnight, he disclosed.

Mr Trimble had earlier managed to exact a similar assurance from Labour and during the debate he interrupted Gavin Strang, the Shadow Agriculture Minister, to ask whether he would back the progressive lifting of the ban, beginning with Northern Ireland. Mr Strang replied "Yes" and told him that the strength of the Northern Ireland scheme was its special identification scheme.

However, the promise seemed unlikely to persuade the Unionists to go into the Labour lobby, and they were believed to be holding out for further concessions from ministers before deciding which way to vote.

Well before last night's division the Tory whips were confident of winning a vote denounced by Mr Hogg as a political stunt. All Tory MPs were voting, including Sir Julian Crichton, Nicholas Baker and Sir Tom Arnold, who are ill but were brought to the Commons to be "nodded through". The Foreign Secretary and other ministers came back from trips abroad.

Peter Riddell, page 10

Bronze lays to rest Dickens of dilemma

BY ALAN HAMILTON

DESPITE a clearly stated intention in his will that he did not want one, Charles Dickens is to be honoured with a statue — the first in Britain to be raised to our most popular of novelists, who died in 1870.

Enthusiasts in the writers' birthplace of Portsmouth have won the city council's approval to raise a bronze effigy of Dickens and have earmarked a site in Commercial Road outside Boots the Chemists. The scheme has the approval of the author's descendants and of the society which keeps his memory alive.

In his will, Dickens ordered his friends "on no account to make me the subject of any monument, memorial or testament whatever". The spirit of his wishes has long been broken; he wanted to be buried in Rochester, but lies in Westminster Abbey, and his whiskered profile stares at anyone who looks at the reverse of a £10 note.

Edward Preston, secretary of the Dickens Fellowship, said last night: "That will be written tongue in cheek, using Sarah Gamp's pen from *Martin Chuzzlewit*. It is in the same vein as Mrs Gamp saying: 'Whatever you do, leave more than a shilling's worth of gin'. Dickens loved publicity; I am sure he really wanted a statue."

David Dickens, the author's Continued on page 2, col 4

£15 A-level surcharge for Latin and Greek students

BY DAVID CHARTER
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

AN examination board provoked outrage among classics teachers yesterday after imposing an extra £15 charge on every Latin and Greek A-level student.

Edexcel, formerly the University of London board, said the extra fee for people sitting examinations this summer was required to cover the cost of setting papers that were taken by so few. The number of entrants for Latin and Greek has plummeted over the past three decades.

The decision to charge 50 per cent more for Latin and Greek than for other academic subjects was condemned for threatening the already uncertain future of both subjects. Teachers accused the board, one of three to offer A-level Latin and Greek, of breaking the spirit of its charitable status.

Philip Parr, head of classics at The Haberdashers' Aske's School in Epsom, Hertfordshire, which will enter a dozen students for Latin and several for Greek this summer, said: "We can pay £15 extra per candidate, but you will find this puts pressure on schools with small Latin or Greek sets either not to take that subject to A-level or, if they do, to pass the cost on to the student."

"It will be another nail in the coffin of minority subjects and yet this is an education system in which we are led to believe you have choice. You can guarantee we will fight this. Classics teachers are like hydra: you cut off some of our parts but we grow two somewhere else."

Students taking A-level Latin and Greek have halved from 3,117 and 583 respectively in 1975 to 1,625 and 283 last year, when 355 took Latin and 54 Greek with Edexcel. Schools will now have to find £43.50 a candidate instead of the £28.50 they were expecting to pay.

The board said: "Supplementary charges are introduced where there are very small numbers of people taking the syllabus. It is a huge cost to the board if a school enters just one or two candidates." Edexcel's two rival boards said yesterday they had no plans to increase charges.

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مذكرة من لامل

Herd instinct leaves no one out to pasture

To try toppling a Government via a debate on brain-disease in cattle via a proposal to cut a minister's salary seems as mad as the maddest cow, but nobody has suggested incinerating MPs. Instead, kicking and lowering, they were herded yesterday into the Commons chamber at 3.30pm for the great debate.

The occasion was as un-tinged as the logic behind it. Gavin Strang, Labour's distrait spokesman on Agriculture, gave the impression of an innocent man confused by sophists. Barracked by Tories, he flailed wildly through his opening speech, stumbling over his first "encephalopathy" and became rattled by

Tory MPs (who think Ms Harman, Shadow Health spokesperson, made the BSE panic worse) shouting "Harriet! Harriet! Where's Harriet?" He jumped back and forth in his text, took a second run at things, cried "Oh yes!" in tones of increasing despair, and offered a passable imitation of a jumping needle on a scratched LP. When his views on beef were challenged, the hapless man protested "I don't want to make a meal of this", to howls of amusement.

Tony Blair had sent his dog, Seated beside Strang, scowling, John Prescott barked intermittently at the Tories, yelled "Shuddup" at hecklers, and tried to help.

"That was July," wailed



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Strang. "That was July!" snorted the dog. "Siddown, baldy!" shouted a Labour heckler at a thinning Tory heckler. "Siddown!" barked Prescott.

Eventually Strang sat down. Douglas Hogg stood up. My colleague on *The Independent* thinks that as the motion was to reduce Hogg's salary, his speech should have emphasised his, his wife's and the hungry little Hoggies' need for the money. *Times* readers may prefer my opinion: that the correct behaviour would have been to leave the room

while his salary was debated.

The Agriculture Minister took neither course. In a bruised speech, he lashed out at every critic, questioned the right of a Scot (Strang) to represent English farmers, sneered at Prescott for having once been a waiter, and blamed the BSE crisis on Ms Harman. Mr Hogg reminds us of those snarling little terriers which, offered a biscuit, sink their teeth into the benefactor's leg. This stupid debate, he claimed, meant "I

cannot attend today's important Agriculture Council when beef will be discussed."

"There'll probably be a breakthrough!" shouted one Labour backbencher.

But at the intervention of one small group of MPs, Hogg's bile turned to treacle. Strang's rally to a coo. Yesterday was the Ulster Unionists' hour in the sun. Was that their leader, David Trimble, dropping a handkerchief? Strang rushed to pick it up. ("Yes, I will give way to the Hon. Gentleman") — *Hon. Members: "Aaaah!"* The Province, insisted Strang, should be "the first ship in the convoy".

Was that Roy Beggs (Antrim E) who fluttered an eyelash?

Hogg all but embraced him, murmuring about the "special circumstances" of Northern Ireland. Hogg had lived in the Province, he grunted, "for many a generation". If the minister had possessed a mandolin he would have serenaded Mr Beggs's table. "I feel strongly about Northern Ireland," he breathed.

But Hogg's ardour had limits. Ian Paisley (DUP, Antrim N) asked if he would put a case to the European Union for exempting Northern Ireland alone from the beef ban on Britain. Unless I am mistaken, John Major (beside him), his expression suggesting "what ever", mouthed "Yes." Hogg said — in so many words — "No". A revealing moment.

Alcoholic surgeon 'operated while drunk'

An alcoholic surgeon regularly performed operations with a blood-alcohol level more than twice the drink-drive limit, an inquiry into the deaths of two of his patients was told. Gerald Davies, 49, a former consultant with St John's Hospital, Livingston, West Lothian, told a fatal accident inquiry that he regularly sat up till 2am painting and drinking half a bottle of whisky with a lager chaser.

He said he had no idea that when he began operating seven hours later, the alcohol was still in his bloodstream. "I never realised," he said. "I tended to drink at night." Ann Halloran, 56, from Livingston, and Willie Callaghan, 69, from Bridgend, West Lothian, died after bowel surgery performed by Mr Davies in 1994. The inquiry continues.

Brain patient claims £1m

Cameron Sharp, a Scottish Olympic sprinter who suffered brain damage after a car accident in 1991, is claiming £1 million in damages from Cumberland Infirmary over the way it treated him. Mr Sharp, 38, who won a gold medal at the 1978 Commonwealth Games, was the victim of inexperienced staff and a hospital that made major errors in failing to consult a specialist unit, his counsel, Simon Maskey, told the High Court in London yesterday. The East Cumbria Health Authority denies the charges.

MoD homes sales boom

The Ministry of Defence has beaten its target of selling unoccupied homes by more than 1,000 properties, Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, announced yesterday at the start of Empty Homes Week. The ministry had aimed to dispose of 4,000 properties by end of last summer, but in fact sold 5,348. Bob Lawrence of the Empty Homes Agency said: "For the first time, the ministry has made a concerted effort to deal with its empty properties. It is a significant achievement."

Genetic maize approved

Four new types of genetically-modified maize have been approved as safe for human and animal consumption in Britain, the Ministry of Agriculture announced yesterday. Scientists advising the Government have cleared the maize for use in processed food in food products, including biscuits, confectionery and breakfast cereals, and as unprocessed grain in animal feed. No special labelling will be required. The new varieties are resistant to either a cereal crop pest or weedkiller.

Prison search deadlock

Two High Court judges, Lord Justice Rose and Mr Justice Hooper, failed to agree whether prison staff should be allowed by law to carry out routine inspections of confidential legal correspondence in inmates' cells as part of tougher searches introduced as a result of the Woodcock report into the escape from Whitemoor prison by IRA members. The case will now be considered by three judges sitting together.

Death on training course

The public service union Unison has called for a ban on outdoor management training courses after an ambulance manager died on a six-mile hike after a suspected heart attack. Colleagues of Stewart Barr, 42, district ambulance officer for North Yorkshire, claimed he had not wanted to take part in the hike, fearing he was not fit enough. The walk, which involved carrying a 20lb backpack, was part of a five-week course for senior officers.

Legal aid fraud curbed

A team of investigators set up last year to check on fraudulent claims for legal aid has saved the taxpayer £1 million, Sir Thomas Legg, permanent secretary at the Lord Chancellor's department, told the Commons Public Accounts Committee yesterday. The accountants and officials targeted 300 claims for civil legal aid, 114 of which were abandoned. Sir Thomas said he might expand the unit to save more taxpayers' money.

Hospital's £11m repair bill

An energy-saving hospital built six years ago is facing a repair bill of £11 million because its stainless steel cladding is rotting away. St Mary's Hospital on the Isle of Wight was commissioned by the Department of Health as a prototype energy-efficient hospital and cost £29 million, £13 million over budget. However, an independent report has concluded that much if not all the cladding will have to be replaced because rain is seeping in.

Stalker 'sent lawyer gifts'

A stalker claiming to be awaiting a two-chance operation was jailed by Paisley Sheriff Court for four months on two charges of breach of the peace after putting a woman lawyer with whom she had become obsessed through a two-year ordeal. Rosemary McAlpine, 28, shadowed the lawyer's every move after seeking professional advice, showering her with unwanted love letters and gifts. McAlpine was freed after a new lawyer lodged an appeal.

Hunt for escaped murderer

Police were last night searching for a murderer who absconded from Leyhill open prison near Bristol. Stephen Mynott, 33, was ordered to be detained at Her Majesty's pleasure 17 years ago after he and another teenager battered 54-year-old Edward Cotton to death when he exposed himself to them. Mynott, who is not considered dangerous, escaped from Channings Wood prison, Devon, four years ago but was recaptured after six weeks.

Rail services cut as private firm lays off drivers

By JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

ANGRY commuters blamed a private rail company yesterday for setting new standards of incompetence when it was forced to cut hundreds of services because it had laid off too many drivers.

Services linking the commuter belt of Surrey, Berkshire, Hampshire and Dorset with Waterloo were left in chaos after South West Trains suspended 39 of its normal timetabled services yesterday for at least a month to release more drivers for peak commuter trains.

The company, which is owned by the Stagecoach bus group, gave redundancy to 70 drivers last month to cut costs and then found it no longer had enough drivers to operate its 1,500 daily services. SWT said it was retraining its remaining drivers and hoped to return to a normal service within five weeks.

John Wans, the Transport Minister responsible for rail privatisation, described the SWT management as "inept" and said the company could have its £55 million annual subsidy cut for failing to meet its obligations.

Nicholas Higgins, 35, a management consultant from Bracknell, Berkshire, said: "There is only one thing that has changed and that is that car parking fees have gone up. It shows what happens when you let a bus company take over a train company. There

Emergency crews led 118 London Underground passengers to safety along the track after a northbound Tube train was derailed 150 yards outside Euston station yesterday morning. Police and ambulance crews were called but nobody was injured in the derailment or the evacuation. All north and southbound services on the affected section of the Northern line were suspended. Services on the Charing Cross branch of the line resumed later. The Northern line between Camden and Moorgate, the City section, was expected to reopen this morning. An investigation was being held into the cause of the accident.

has been too much emphasis on cost cutting and not a blind bit of notice on what it does to the poor old commuter."

Brian Courtney, 46, an advertising executive from Guildford, said: "Not even in the darkest days under BR was it this bad. I was all in favour of privatisation but this lot are hopeless. Three trains from Guildford were cancelled on Friday and we were packed like sardines into a train half the normal length. How are you supposed to do a day's work after that?"

Charles Martin, a banker from Godalming, said: "It's hard to understand South West Trains when they say getting rid of 70 drivers will make things better. You have

to wonder if they are using temporary cancellations to achieve permanent cuts."

A spokesman for SWT, which ran the first ever privatised train when it took over the franchise from BR last February, admitted "teething problems" with its staff restructuring programme but insisted it was doing its best to minimise inconvenience. Of the 39 daily services affected, only one was in a peak time and 33 were frequent, short-distance routes, she said.

A spokesman for Opra, the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising which is responsible for monitoring the performance of private train companies, said that SWT's overall performance showed marked improvements over BR. He praised SWT for taking rapid action to deal with an operational problem. "It is hardly a hanging offence," he said.

However, if the chaos continues, Opra could fine the company hundreds of thousands of pounds for failing to meet its passenger service requirements.

Critics of rail privatisation said the crisis confirmed all their worst fears about the sell off. Jonathan Bray, co-ordinator of the Save Our Railways lobby group, said: "It's certainly astonishing incompetence by management. We're not aware of anything like it happening before. There have got to be questions asked about why this company was given the contract in the first place when their cost-cutting project was obviously unworkable."



A drawing of the proposed Dickens statue

Dickens of an effigy

Continued from page 1
great-grandson and president of the International Dickens Fellowship, said: "I do not see any reason why not to have a statue. A lot of people saw the rebuttal of a statue in his will as a secret hope that somebody would overrule him and say: 'Of course we must have a statue. old man'. The view is that... he was really saying 'Well, if you insist'."

Professor Tony Pounton, chairman of the author's fan club at Portsmouth University, who is leading the campaign for a statue to mark the author's birth in 1812, said that although Dickens had stated he did not want a statue, his other wishes had already been denied. He said: "Other members of the city's branch of the fellowship and say that a more fitting memo-

rial would be to attract more tourists to his birthplace.

Dickens is not entirely without effigies. There is a statue to him in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and there used to be one of him in Adelaide, South Australia, until it was vandalised: its surviving remnants are now in a local museum. And there is a bust of him in the Prudential Assurance company headquarters at Holborn Bars, central London.

The Portsmouth proposal, for which designs have been drawn up, is of the author standing at a table reciting from one of his works. The drawback is that the Dickens Fellowship will have to raise up to £25,000 if they wish to see their dream realised. If they can raise it, the Micawberish result will be happiness. If not, misery.

Mass vaccination to contain spread of fowlpest in Ulster

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

MASS vaccination of Northern Ireland's entire stock of 14.5 million poultry was set in motion yesterday to contain the worst outbreak of fowlpest disease in more than 20 years.

About 400,000 birds have been slaughtered on seven farms hit by the highly contagious viral infection, which is also known as Newcastle disease. A quarter of a million birds were killed on one farm alone, Peter Small, permanent secretary at the province's

Department of Agriculture, said it was too soon to judge how quickly vaccination would halt the spread but added: "It is purely an animal health issue. There is no public-health risk from poultry meat or eggs."

Although only seven out of 2,240 poultry farms have been infected so far, it could spread rapidly because the industry is highly concentrated. Six-mile exclusion zones, in which all movement of poultry and poultry products is prohibited,

are being enforced around affected farms in Antrim, Armagh, Tyrone and Co Down. In the zones, two million birds have been compulsorily vaccinated. Elsewhere, the vaccination will be voluntary and at the farmers' expense, but most are expected to cooperate.

Scientists are to carry out fresh investigations of the health effects of organo-phosphate sheep dips on the recommendation from the Veterinary Products Committee.

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'Very dangerous' stalker will go free in two years



Stalker: Clarence Morris

By KATHERINE KNIGHT AND RICHARD FORD

A JUDGE was yesterday forced to limit a jail sentence on a "very dangerous" stalker to five years instead of life in a secure hospital after psychiatrists disagreed over whether he was mentally ill.

Judge Butler, QC, said he feared the consequences of sending Clarence Morris to jail for stalking a 20-year-old dental nurse for eight months because he would be free in just over two years. Southwark Crown Court was told that Morris, 38, had 45 previous convictions, including the rape of a girl aged 15.

Two psychiatrists, Professor Jeremy Coid, who works at a semi-secure mental unit at Hackney, east London, and Dr Harold Kennedy, said that in their opinion Morris suffered from paranoid schizophrenia and a psychopathic disorder. Both agreed he was a

"very dangerous man, particularly to women", Judge Butler said. "They said a secure hospital was required for his treatment and they also agreed there should be an order restricting his discharge from hospital without limit of time."

However, while Morris was at Rampton high-security hospital in Nottinghamshire for assessment, Dr Jeremy Resnick, the psychiatrist who examined him, concluded that he had found only evidence of a psychopathic personality disorder, and that the defendant was not mentally ill. Giving evidence yesterday, Dr Resnick said he could not admit Morris to the hospital because he had found no sign of treatable mental illness and could not do anything for him.

Judge Butler said he found that conclusion "rather surprising" because it meant a hospital order could not be made, so Rampton

would not accept him. He asked Professor Coid if he was willing to take him into his clinic in Hackney. "No, I consider him too dangerous for a medium-security hospital," Professor Coid told him.

Passing sentence, Judge Butler said that despite the "clear conflict of opinion" he felt the evidence pointed to the fact that it was "more probable than not that Clarence Morris does suffer from mental illness". He went on: "The fact is, however, that Rampton, as I say, will not have him, and Professor Coid tells me that he is too dangerous to be admitted to his medium-secure unit. There is, therefore, only one realistic course left open to me and that is to pass a sentence of imprisonment." Unfortunately, he could impose no more than five years.

"The difficulty is this: he must be released on licence when he has served just over three years of that

sentence, and as he has been in custody for a period approaching one year, the result will be that this dangerous man will be released back into the community in not very much longer than two years from now."

Morris was convicted last year after a jury decided that the psychological scarring suffered by Perry Southall was so severe it was the equivalent of physical injury. In a series of more than 200 incidents, the court was told, Morris had bombarded her with letters, sent items of female underwear to her at work and twice threatened her with a bladed wallpaper scraper.

Miss Southall said of the sentence last night: "It's just not long enough. The thought of him being back on the streets is absolutely terrifying."

Sir Peter Lloyd, a former prisons minister, said: "This is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs.

There is some argument in the medical profession between those who say psychopaths are treatable and those who say they are not. But even if they are not treatable, they are clearly not sane and prison is not the right place for them."

He said the courts were in a difficult position as they clearly had to accept the clinical judgment of those to whom they entrusted a prisoner. "If the clinical judgment of the psychiatrist at Rampton was that this man was not mentally ill, the judge must accept that."

The Home Office said last night that the judge could have sought further opinion on Morris's mental state.

A spokesman for Rampton, which is not full, said: "If someone is not taken on by our admissions panel, then there are no powers for the person to be ordered to come here. We only admit people who are mentally ill."



Stalked: Perry Southall

Silent phone calls and a watchful stranger at the home of murdered 13-year-old

Billie-Jo lived and died in fear of mystery stalker

By EMMA WILKINS AND JOANNE BALE

A GIRL who was bludgeoned to death in her family's garden had feared that she was being stalked, it emerged yesterday.

Billie-Jo Jenkins, 13, told school friends that a man was following her in the streets near her home in Hastings, and that an anonymous caller had telephoned the family home but had hung up before speaking.

A 44-year-old local man was arrested last night in connection with police inquiries. It is understood that he is the man with a disfiguring facial birthmark who was seen in the road near the Jenkins house on Saturday, the day of her murder. Detectives emphasised that their inquiries were continuing.

Detective Superintendent Jeremy Paine, who is leading the investigation, said: "We are picking up accounts from her friends that she was worried about a man following her, and also that there were strange phone calls to the house. Billie-Jo was very concerned."

Friends said she had been unable to give a full description of the suspected stalker but that he was white, in his 40s or 50s, wearing a leather jacket and that the incidents began just after Christmas. The description matches that



Aerial view of the street, with the murder scene arrowed. A stranger had stared from the park across the road

of a man who was seen by Sion Jenkins, her foster father, staring intently at the house from Alexandra Park, just across the road. Mr Jenkins installed security lights at the family home after disturbing a prowler in the garden just 12 days before the killing. None of the incidents was reported to police.

Billie-Jo suffered severe head injuries when she was attacked with an 18 in metal tent spike. The body was discovered by Mr Jenkins, deputy headmaster of the William Parker comprehensive school for boys. Billie-Jo had been left alone, painting a patio door, while he went to collect two other children from a music lesson.

"There was clearly a lot of fear within the family regarding the prowler, which is linked to the feeling that Billie-Jo had that someone was paying particular attention to the house," Mr Paine said. "There is a general feeling among the family that something strange was going on."

Detectives appealed for an anonymous motorist, who reported seeing a man leaving the Jenkins house shortly after the time of the murder, to call the incident room again with more details.



Billie-Jo was emerging from a troubled past

Billie-Jo was fostered by the Jenkins family four years ago. Mr Jenkins and his wife Lois, a social worker who has four natural daughters, are deeply shocked by the killing.

Their foster daughter was said to have been in "fairly regular" contact with her natural parents, who live in east London and are separated. The Jenkins also lived in east London before moving to Hastings in 1993.

Mr Paine said: "It is clear that she came from a troubled background but she appears to have been a fun-loving person who brought joy to anyone she came into contact

with." Billie-Jo loved hockey, drama and swimming. At the town's Helenswood Comprehensive School for girls, Jenny Blackburn, the headmistress, said that she had been a popular pupil, and that she had recently shown signs of maturing into a thoughtful student.

"There had been stresses on her in the past but she was beginning to turn a corner and show signs of being serious about her work," she said.

"Over the last few weeks, she was beginning to be a little bit more mature. She was talking about going to drama

college and thinking about her future."

Billie-Jo had a small part in a recent school production of *My Fair Lady*, and was elected by 167 girls in her year as representative to the School Council. She organised a "pick-up-litter" rota around the school grounds.

Mrs Blackburn said the school would hold a special assembly for Billie-Jo's year. Pupils would also be asked for ideas about a memorial that was to be installed in three school grounds. She added: "There is an eerie silence in school today. The girls are

walking around very quietly in shock."

"Billie-Jo was a lively 13-year-old with a strong character and she had lots of friends. There is nothing that prepares one for something as dreadful as this, but my job now is to help the children get through it."

Billie-Jo was involved in an incident two years ago, when she reported that she and her sister had been chased in Alexandra Park by a man. That was reported to police at the time. There is no evidence that the earlier incident is connected to her murder.

Lynne Lindsay, who lives near the Jenkinses, said: "Everyone is petrified now that this murderer is on the loose. No one will let their kids out of sight. We have a lovely park across the road but everyone is scared to use it."

Tom Oliver, 81, a former retired engineer who also lives near by, said: "I have been here 23 years and the place has really gone down hill, particularly in the last few years. My wife is reluctant to go out alone for fear of being attacked. I came down here to retire but sometimes I wish I had never moved."

City fears return of four-time murderer

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

A FOUR-TIME killer jailed in Australia is seeking parole and may be deported to his native Britain. Archie "Mad Dog" McCafferty, 47, is thought likely to return to Glasgow, which he left at the age of ten.

A city council spokesman said: "Clearly there is an issue of public safety. If McCafferty is paroled in Australia he will not be subject to any enforceable parole conditions or controls in this country. These are concerns we have passed on to the Scottish Office."

McCafferty, who never sought Australian citizenship, has served 23 years in a Sydney prison. He has threatened to kill again after claiming at his trial that his dead baby son appeared in a mirror and told him to "kill seven".

He was given a life sentence in 1974 for three random murders while on drugs and leading a gang of teenagers. He was recommended to serve a minimum of 20 years and in 1981 was given a further 14 years for killing a fellow inmate, but is now said to be a model prisoner. His parole application, which will be heard next Tuesday, is his fifth attempt to win freedom.

Police, social workers, forensic psychologists and housing officers will meet in Glasgow this week to discuss preparations for McCafferty's arrival. The council would be obliged to offer him housing and 12 months' "advice and assistance" if he asks for it.



McCafferty: seeks parole from Australian prison

Once genteel resort has become magnet for down-and-outs

By JOANNE BALE

IN ITS heyday Hastings was an elegant resort frequented by Queen Victoria and crowds of wealthy holidaymakers. Today, with many of its grand old houses converted into DSS hostels and bedsits, it is one of the poorest towns in southern England. Drug and alcohol abuse and violent crime are rife and the town is struggling to keep its £75 million a year tourism trade.

In Lower Park Road, where Billie-Jo Jenkins lived, there are six

registered bed-and-breakfast hotels and a private care home for mentally handicapped people. An empty property next door to the Jenkins house is used by vagrants. There are plans to turn it into a home for the mentally handicapped. There are also nine care-in-the-community hostels in the town, with more planned.

Although Billie-Jo's murder has shocked residents, many say that, after five murders last year, she was an inevitable statistic in Hastings. There is 14 per cent unemployment

and 11 per cent of homes are unfit for human habitation, twice the national average. Eighteen in every thousand people in the town commit suicide, compared with 12 in every thousand nationally.

Three years ago the Government granted Hastings assisted area status, making it a priority for EU grants. One resident, Jim Horner, 65, said yesterday: "The place has deteriorated so much over the last 25 years. The town seems to be a magnet for all sorts of undesirable people. They migrate here from all

over the country. Rents are cheap and people think because it's the South Coast the living will be good. They forget that it's an area of high unemployment."

Many residents believe that the high level of mental health and social problems is a result of "dumping" by local authorities elsewhere.

After the Second World War, London boroughs bought land in the town and built council houses. Later, when large psychiatric institutions closed down, people were

"farmed out" to residential homes and bedsits in the area.

Janet Francis, 50, a housewife, said: "Some of the richest people in Hastings are the owners of hostels, bedsits and bed-and-breakfast hotels, who receive thousands of pounds of government money for housing the unemployed and the mentally ill. There are lots of psychiatric patients wandering around Hastings unsupervised."

One man visiting a friend in Lower Park Road yesterday was typical of the young psychiatric

patients in the town. The heavily tattooed man, who declined to be named, said he was registered mentally ill.

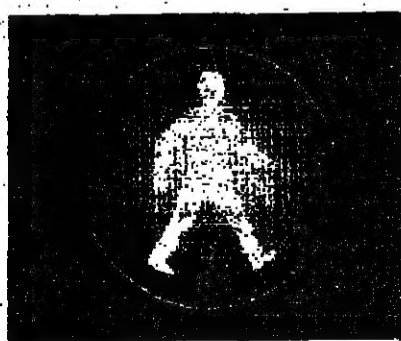
"The main problem here is drugs," he said. "They are very cheap and easy to get hold of. I used to deal them myself. I moved here six years ago from Tunbridge Wells to get away from family problems and the police. There are lots of people here like me, unemployed and living in bedsits. A lot have alcohol and drugs problems: there's nothing else to do."



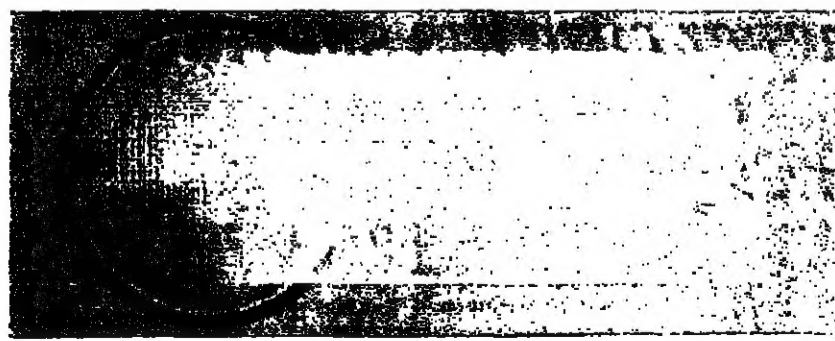
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مركزاً من راسم

Inaccurate sperm tests 'misdiagnose male fertility'

SPERM tests in Britain are a complete lottery, with many hospitals wrongly assessing male fertility, scientists said last night.

The same sperm sample was assessed by one clinic as having three million sperm per millilitre and by another as 240 million. A normal count is more than 100 million, while less than 20 million indicates the man may require treatment for subfertility.

The findings suggest that many childless couples are being misdiagnosed and given the wrong treatments because their doctors may erroneously assume that the problem lies with the man. The finding was made by infertility experts who are part of a national

study to assess the quality of the sperm screening service. They blame shoddy laboratory practices and poor training of staff at NHS hospitals and private clinics.

David Thorn of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, which licenses fertility clinics, said that it could do little until hospitals agreed on common screening procedures. He said a culture had grown up of giving higher priority to female rather than male fertility.

The findings, which will be disclosed at a World Health Organisation meeting in April, are based on initial studies of 20 British hospitals and clinics backed up by a second survey of nearly 100,

Hundreds of couples could be getting the wrong treatment for subfertility because of errors by hospitals in testing sperm samples.

Nick Nuttall, technology correspondent, reports

including many district hospitals. Up to 16 of the 24 samples dispatched to infertility centres were diagnosed as being below the critical 20-million mark. Yet the same samples, sent to other centres, were estimated by different laboratories as being above the level at which medical help is needed. For example one sample was estimated to have just 100,000 sperm per millilitre whereas at

another centre the count was 56 million.

The findings also show alarming difference in the diagnosis of the health of sperm based on their shapes. At one laboratory, a sample was deemed to have only five per cent healthy sperm. But the same sample, sent to another laboratory, was calculated to have 72 per cent healthy sperm. Around 200,000 men are classed

as subfertile in Britain, with around one in six couples estimated to have difficulties in conceiving a child. Increasing numbers seek fertility treatments ranging from in-vitro fertilisation or sperm donation to surrogate births.

Allan Pacey of Sheffield University and Jessop Hospital for Women said: "We have got a situation where men are being wrongly diagnosed as infertile when they are perfectly normal and the other way round. Men are told they are normal when they should be having treatment."

He said in cases where the man is wrongly diagnosed as having healthy sperm levels, "a lot of time-consuming tests will then be done

on the female partner". The claims also cast doubt on claims that sperm counts in the western world are declining due to pollution. "If you cannot get the laboratories to read the same sample with any degree of accuracy, then how can you make wild claims about sperm counts going up or going down?" Dr Pacey said.

Diane Critchlow of St Mary's Hospital for Women and Children in Manchester, who is co-ordinating the UK National External Quality Scheme which is assessing the accuracy of sperm screening, said yesterday that the latest figures showed a small improvement in the assessment of sperm counts but not in assessing the health of

sperm. "We are trying to improve matters," she said.

Dr Pacey and Dr Chris Barratt of Sheffield University have developed a computer screening system which they hope will standardise screening techniques and avoid the problem of contradictory results.

Peter Brinsden, medical director of the Bourn Hall IVF clinic, Cambridge, said low sperm counts should always be checked. "In the smaller labs you get up to 50 per cent variability. That means someone with a sperm count of 40-50 million could be told they are subfertile. You should get the count repeated at least twice in a unit that does a lot of investigation of male infertility."

Minister curbs influence of social workers to end 'politically correct' refusals

Couples win new powers to adopt from abroad

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

CHILDLESS couples hoping to adopt babies from abroad received a boost yesterday from a pledge by Stephen Dorrell to eradicate "political correctness" from adoption.

The Health Secretary announced rules aiming to give new rights to prospective adopters. Councils will be required to tell couples why they are being rejected as parents and adoption panels will have to include more lay people.

"Safeguards are essential to protect children," said Mr Dorrell. "But dogmatic decisions have sometimes ruled out adoptive parents on grounds of education, age and race. The changes announced today will help to remove political correctness from adoption and introduce more independence and transparency."

"Adoption panels play a key role in the decision to allow or refuse an adoption. It is vital that their judgments are objective and open to challenge by people who find that a recommendation has gone against their wish to adopt a child."

Couples and individuals will be entitled to see the reports on their suitability prepared by social workers, make a written statement arguing why they should be allowed to adopt, and can

appeal. The Health Secretary will shift the balance of power away from professionals to ordinary people by changing the make-up of adoption panels, which have the power of veto over prospective parents.

The panels must increase the number of lay members from two to three, and try to introduce more people who have adopted children or were adopted themselves. Each panel at present includes at least two social workers and a medical adviser.

The first reform in the adoption regulations for 14 years will benefit British families willing to provide homes for orphans from China, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the Far East.

Many have complained of the incomprehensible hurdles placed in their path by social workers. Some couples have been ordered to learn Mandarin Chinese, a notoriously difficult language. The demand for foreign babies has grown rapidly as the number of British infants placed for adoption dwindles to 400 a year. With an estimated 20 couples applying for each available British-born baby, agencies can afford to choose the ideal young, healthy parents with a correct racial match. Because the



Dorrell: wants system to be more transparent

are rejected for being the wrong race, having too little cultural connection with the country involved or for other more obscure reasons.

Naomi Angell, who chairs the Campaign for Inter-Country Adoption, said: "People feel they are turned down because they are too educated or the fathers have high-powered jobs and won't be home enough."

Many British adoption panels have an unofficial policy of rejecting mothers aged more than 35. But officials in China, for example, have such respect for maturity that they usually refuse to give children to couples unless they are at least 35.

Social workers are accused of applying the rules on cultural compatibility clumsily. One couple was told to learn Spanish although the baby, from Paraguay, was born to a mother who spoke a native Indian language.

Felicity Collier of the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering group said: "The political rhetoric which has accompanied these overdue regulations is very sad and unfortunate. The worst thing you can do for children who have lost their original families is to place them with families where it is not going to work out."

same strict rules are applied to people who want to adopt babies from abroad, only 155 of the 7,000 annual adoptions currently involve foreign children.

Even if couples want to adopt children from overseas, they must be approved by their local authority adoption panel. They face bills of up to £3,000 for a "home study", which takes six months and includes probing interviews with them and their referees and a medical examination. Applicants complain that they



Jim and Roma Lawrence: complained after they were rejected as parents

Dorrell blunders in attack on adoption decision

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

THE mixed race couple who were cited by Stephen Dorrell yesterday as victims of politically correct social workers were properly rejected as adoptive parents, an inquiry into the case by his own department concluded.

The Health Secretary made his second blunder in a week when he alluded to the case of Jim and Roma Lawrence, an Anglo-Asian couple from Cromer, Norfolk, while defending changes to adoption rules to be introduced on April 1 designed to ensure "common-sense" values prevail. Last week Mr Dorrell embarrassed the Prime Minister by suggesting that a future Tory government might abolish a Scottish parliament set up by Labour.

Speaking on the Today programme yesterday, he said decisions about adoption had become dominated by political correctness. Without naming the Lawrences, he said: "The best example is where a mixed race couple were rejected on the grounds they didn't know enough about racism. Any commonsense person would

ask not whether a couple knew about racism but whether they could provide a secure and loving home for the children."

Later, however, it emerged that fears about the couple's rigid attitude to child rearing was the chief reason they were rejected. It is understood they had told social workers that children should not be allowed to listen to pop music but should listen to Beethoven instead, and that they should dress in sensible clothes rather than follow fashions.

The case sparked a national debate about adoption in July 1993 when the couple claimed they had been told they were being rejected because they were "racially naive" after they said they had not experienced any racial prejudice in 12 years living in the town.

Ministers called for the papers on the case, as a result of the attention it had attracted, and the health department conducted an investigation which concluded in September 1993 that the social workers had given "due and proper consideration" to the case. It said the couple had been

turned down because of the need to keep "the interests and welfare" of children " paramount".

Geoff Gildersleeve, assistant director in charge of children's services at Norfolk County Council, said: "We're somewhat surprised if this case is being used as an example of social workers getting it wrong, as the health department examined all the papers in the case and confirmed our decision." He said there had always been three lay members on the ten member adoption panel, which had recently been increased to four, and social workers were outnumbered. Every prospective adoptive couple could see their assessment and comment on it.

Mr Lawrence said the health department inquiry had been a whitewash. "I spoke to the civil servants unofficially and they said it was an absolute shambles but there was nothing they could do about it. It was a local authority matter." He said his wife had given up trying to adopt.

Search for abducted daughter widened

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

INTERPOL yesterday joined the hunt for a respected British scientist who abducted his four-year-old daughter from her mother a week ago and disappeared with her.

Mark Burkitt, 34, a biochemist and cancer research specialist based at the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen, took the child during an access visit in Grimsland, Norway.

It is thought his mother, Patricia Burkitt, from Hull, may have assisted in the abduction. She is also missing. Norwegian police think the trio may be heading for Japan, where Dr Burkitt worked last year, although he has used a credit card in Amsterdam.

Yesterday Bjorg Knutsen, 29, Dr Burkitt's former wife, appealed for her daughter's safe return and for anyone with information to come forward. She won custody of Emma in August 1995 at Aberdeen Sheriff Court. She had travelled to her former husband's home in Turfiff, Aberdeenshire, to try to pick up clues as to her daughter's whereabouts.

"My husband is definitely not stable. I am just thankful that Emma's grandmother is with them, as I know she will look after her," she said.

In what appeared to be a carefully planned operation, Dr Burkitt left friends a number of letters to post, together with instructions to pay bills while he was away. Professor Ian Bremner, a colleague and friend, confirmed yesterday a letter had been received from Dr Burkitt addressed to the director of the Rowett Institute. "He made it quite clear he did not expect to be back for quite some time," he said. Dr Burkitt had been upset about losing custody of his daughter.

Nicholas Hinton (Obituary, January 23) did not, while chief executive-designate of the Millennium Commission, decide to appoint his former executive assistant at the Save the Children Fund to the post of deputy director of the Commission.

Back in bed together after snore cure



A COUPLE who were worried about the snoring of their partner have found a solution. The couple, who live in a quiet suburb of Worcester, have been able to sleep peacefully together again after a snore cure.

Separate bedrooms and ear plugs will never cure his snoring.

This new procedure to eliminate snoring could mean an end of sleepless nights for snorers and their partners. It's simple and straightforward, and often involves no more than one 15-20 minute session. As Kean Clifford found to his surprise, it's no different to a short visit to the dentist.

Like one third of the adult population and one in ten women, Kean Clifford snored. In fact, he snored so loudly and so persistently, it drove his wife into the spare bedroom.

Silly, for the millions of snorers, this is a common story. But it goes worse. What starts out as joke soon leads to sleepless nights, rows, bitterness and, in many cases, even divorce.

And for the partners of snorers, ear plugs and other so-called remedies do little to end the nightly torment.

But now this simple and straightforward procedure is readily available at The Sleep Disorder Clinic. Using the very latest laser technique, the loose tissue at the back of the throat which is the cause of snoring is gently removed under local anaesthetic, with you sleeping comfortably in a chair. There is no pain and in a matter of minutes you're on your way to resume your day's schedule. It's that simple. And that's why it's so important you do something now about your snoring.

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THE SLEEP DISORDER CLINIC

Park vandals must Keats off the grass

By ALAN HAMILTON

ANYONE in a public park at Spennymoor, Co Durham, alone and palely loitering with intent to commit vandalism, will be deterred in future by quotations from Keats.

Officials have decided that the tranquil atmosphere of their award-winning Jubilee Park is spoiled by official-looking notices of exhortation and prohibition. Instead they are to erect placards proclaiming such pearls as "A thing of beauty is a joy forever", "Leave nothing but footprints" and "Take nothing but photographs".

The first two are quotations from Keats's *Endymion*, the tale of a love affair between a goddess and a shepherd. The third is not. They are a rare change from the usual "Keep off the grass", "No dog fouling" and "Do not pick the flowers".

Councillor Hannah Ferguson, who dreamed up the idea, said yesterday she believed the velvet glove approach to antisocial behaviour in the park would be more effective than the iron fist. "We have a beautiful park which we are very proud of, and we wanted to try to maintain an aura of

peace and tranquility. If you have signs everywhere about dogs, litter, ball games, picking flowers or whatever, it can make a place look ugly, like a fortress," Mrs Ferguson said.

"I also think if you keep telling people what they can and cannot do, you encourage them to rebel. It has the opposite effect." Mrs Ferguson said that, while she hoped the words of Keats would have the desired effect, the park authorities still had the backup of closed-circuit television.

Terry Robson, town clerk of Spennymoor, dismissed suggestions that the citizens of a north-east industrial town might not appreciate the romantic genius of Keats. "We have a rich tradition of supporting the arts, and I am sure Keats will go down very well." The writer himself said that if poetry comes not as naturally as leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all. At least it makes a change from the park-keepers who terrorised children of an earlier age, their smiles wan as primroses gathered at midnight by chilly-finger'd spring.

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Married quarters to be made available and pay anomalies corrected, says minister

Gurkhas win fight to have families in Britain

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

GURKHA soldiers withdrawn from Hong Kong will be allowed to bring their families to bases in Britain, Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, confirmed yesterday.

About 900 wives and children are expected to come and 450 married quarters are being made available. This is the first time that Gurkhas serving in Britain will have their families with them.

The change in policy came after the first major review of Gurkhas' pay and conditions for 40 years, triggered by the withdrawal from Hong Kong and the relocation of the most to Britain. Many of the married Gurkhas in Hong Kong were accompanied by their families.

Last year, before the review was completed, the Government faced angry protests from former Gurkha service associations over its perceived failure to guarantee accompanied tours for Gurkhas moving from Hong Kong to Britain. Under an agreement signed by Britain, India and

Nepal in 1947, the Government has to provide married quarters for 25 per cent of its Gurkha troops.

Of the 3,400-man Brigade of Gurkhas, 2,386 are now based in Britain. There are also 830 in Brunei and about 100 still in Hong Kong. The total manpower figure will be reduced to 3,253 by next year.

Married quarters will be provided in the areas where the Gurkhas are stationed, including more than 100 homes in Aldershot, close to Church Crookham in Hampshire where the 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles is based, 44 in Colchester and 23 in Catterick.

Sergeants and below will be granted one three-year tour of duty accompanied by their families while more senior ranks will be permanently accompanied.

Gurkha parents will be able to send their children to school in Britain or receive an education allowance for their children to go to boarding school in Nepal. As part of the review, Gurkha soldiers are also to be



Gurkhas at the Queen Elizabeth barracks in Hampshire yesterday. About 900 wives and children are expected to travel to Britain

given an "equal pay" deal to bring them into line with their British counterparts.

The new pay system, which will cost an extra £1 million a year, will be introduced to sweep away the tangle of anomalies and allowances that mean one soldier could be earning £13,000 a year more than another of the same rank.

Senior MoD sources said that at present a Gurkha corporal, married but unaccompanied and serving in Brunei was earning £7,260 a year, compared with a married corporal accompanied by his family who was being paid £20,000.

Following cross-party demands that the Nepalese soldiers be given equal treatment, the Government was anxious to reassure the Gurkhas that their longstanding

relationship with the British Army was still valued.

Mr Soames said in a written Commons answer that from July 1 all Gurkhas would be paid a universal rate, replacing the previous system of special allowances that had created the bizarre disparities.

Under the new system of equal pay, all corporals will receive £13,000, giving a £6,000 rise for some but a £7,000 cut for

337. Senior officers were sent to Brunei yesterday to try to explain to those getting a pay cut that for years they had been enjoying a "windfall".

The MoD review will not affect Gurkhas' pensions which have become a controversial issue, particularly between the parties in Nepal.

However, the pension is linked only to the basic pay which means that a Gurkha

corporal gets a pension of £26 a month. The MoD sources emphasised that, unlike their British counterparts, Gurkhas received a pension immediately they left the Army.

The standard of living was also much lower than Britain's, with the average annual income only about £25, they said.

Leading article, page 19

Dying drug addict will not be tried for murder

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A DRUG addict accused of murder will not face trial because she is dying from cystic fibrosis and doctors have refused to operate unless she gives up her habit.

Linda Hargis, 24, is accused of killing Idris Abibu in Moss Side, Manchester, after a drug deal went sour. She allegedly drove off with him hanging out of the passenger window of her car which then crashed into a row of parked cars.

Anthony Gee, QC, for the prosecution at Manchester Crown Court, took the unusual step yesterday of asking for the murder charge to lie on the file. It will not be reinstated without leave by the Crown Court or the Court of Appeal. Judge Rhys Davies said the prosecution could reactivate the case if her medical condition ever improved. The court was told that her life expectancy was precarious.

Mr Gee said: "The only possible treatment would be a lung transplant but she is addicted to hard drugs and the decision not to transplant would only be reviewed if she can convince the medical authorities that she can completely withdraw from her condition because a lung transplant is extremely rare and expensive."

Miss Hargis was arrested after Mr Abibu handed a package to her. She refused to pay, claiming the substance was fake, and allegedly drove off when an argument began.

Rain fails to dampen rocket man's high-flying ambition

By PAUL WILKINSON

STEVEN BENNETT was claiming "at least 50 per cent success" for his latest attempt to join the space race yesterday after his new rocket blasted off into the clouds over Northumbria. As he set off to look for it in driving rain, he said: "If we get the rocket back, it will have been 100 per cent successful."

It took five attempts for the amateur rocket-maker from Dukinfield, Greater Manchester, to achieve lift-off at the Army's firing range at Otterburn on the bleak Cheviot Hills.

The rain meant that adjustments to the delicate electronics had to be made in the back of Mr Bennett's car while a supermarket carrier bag was draped over the end of the fuselage as it was manhandled into position beneath the black nose cone.

As the wind gusts to gale force, assistants pulled rocks from the moorland to steady the launchpad. While observers, including Mr Bennett's six-year-old son, Max, retired 400 yards, Mr Bennett hunkered down at the end of a 30ft command wire behind a low black wall.

Four times he gave the brief



Lexx lifted off at the fifth attempt yesterday

countdown from five to zero with no reaction. Rain had penetrated, causing a short circuit, he reported. At the fifth attempt there was a puff of white smoke before the slender black and silver Lexx rocket leapt into the sky. Its

intense yellow-white exhaust flame was visible for only seconds before it penetrated the clouds 2,000ft overhead.

His hope of breaking the sound barrier appeared to have been dashed as he listened in vain for the tell-tale sonic boom. A signal from the rocket abruptly ceased and there was no sign of it floating back to earth on its built-in parachute.

Mr Bennett, however, remained optimistic. "We have achieved everything we set out to do today. Early indications are that it reached three miles high and that it broke the sound barrier. No-one else in Europe has yet done that."

Mr Bennett, 32, is using his experience as an amateur rocketeer since his youth to organise a serious commercial space venture. With the backing of Salford University, where he is now a visiting research fellow in the space science department, he hopes to set up a company capable of placing small research or commercial payloads in earth orbit by the end of the century.

Yesterday he was test-launching the 47lb top section of the three-stage rocket to check its on-board computer. "Once again I've proved the sky is not the limit," he said.

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Their horrendous plight can and should provoke deep sympathy, Appeal Court says

Asylum-seekers win right to free food and shelter

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

ASYLUM-SEEKERS who are disallowed state benefits must still be given food and shelter by local authorities, the Court of Appeal said yesterday in a ruling that will cost the Department of Health an estimated £40 million.

It said that local councils were under a legal duty to provide the basics of survival to refugees whose financial benefits were withdrawn last year and who had no other means of support. The cuts in benefits are estimated to save £200 million a year on the social security budget.

Although the Department of Health has said that it would meet the cost of helping asylum-seekers, councils claim they will still be out of pocket. Lord Woolf, the Master of the Rolls, sitting with two other judges, ruled that councils must provide food and shelter under the National Assistance Act 1948 which replaced the Poor Law. The court dismissed an appeal by Westminster council and the London boroughs of Lambeth and Hammersmith and Fulham against a High Court decision that they must provide the basics for survival.

In a written judgment the three judges said: "The plight of asylum-seekers who are in the position of the respondents obviously can and should provoke deep sympathy. Their plight is indeed horrendous."

The four asylum-seekers who brought the case are a Romanian who arrived aboard a lorry last July, has slept rough under Waterloo Bridge and has nowhere to live, no money and speaks no English; an Algerian who arrived last July and has slept rough in Hyde Park, London; a Chinese citizen who arrived last May; and an Iraqi Kurd who arrived secretly last August.

The three local authorities claimed that their duty to provide shelter, warmth and food was only to those in need by reason of age, illness,

disability and not to able-bodied people who simply had no money.

Michael Beloff, QC, for the councils, had told Lord Woolf and Lords Justices Waite and Henry that the Government, in introducing its curbs on benefits for asylum-seekers, had thought extreme measures were required to frustrate the desire of bogus refugees to make use of welfare services at the expense of taxpayers.

As a result many asylum-seekers, who were not allowed

added their inability to speak the language, their ignorance of this country and the fact they had been subject to the stress of coming to the UK in circumstances that involved at least a claim to refugee status.

The combined effect of these factors, with the passage of time, would produce one or more of the "care and attention" criteria laid down in the 1948 Act.

"They do not need to wait until the health of the asylum-seeker has been damaged," the judges said.

The local authorities were refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords but plan to petition the law lords. Lawyers for the councils told the judges that ministers were currently proposing to take at least part of the burden back on to central government funds with retrospective effect but that still left substantial problems for local authorities.

About 3,272 adult asylum-seekers are being helped by local authorities at a cost of £645,000 a week. The Government is proposing to reimburse local authorities with payments of up to £165 per asylum-seeker a week but the authorities say the actual cost is £200 a week and they are being left to make up the shortfall.

Westminster council said that it was dismayed by the judgment. "Supporting asylum-seekers who are without accommodation or means of support is not a duty which should rest with local authorities and is fraught with legal and technical problems."

The council estimates it will spend £8 million in the next financial year providing support and accommodation for asylum-seekers.

Gerry Clore, solicitor for the asylum-seekers, welcomed the ruling. "No civilised society can tolerate a system where people are intended to starve, and the courts have recognised that again and again."

In addition to the lack of food and housing were to be

to work, faced the choice between starvation or being sent back to the country where they claimed to have been persecuted. But that did not justify shifting the burden on to local authorities, he said.

The judges said that asylum-seekers were not entitled to claim automatic assistance from local authorities just because they had no money and accommodation. They were entitled to claim that as a result of the withdrawal of benefits, they were likely to end up in need of care and attention.

In addition to the lack of food and housing were to be



Georgi Spasov, left, and Dimitar Dimitrov: adapting to local life includes the weather and the lottery

Stranded crewmen allowed to keep their new life on friendly Shetland

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

TWO stranded Bulgarians befriended by Shetland islanders were celebrating yesterday after winning their fight for refugee status. Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, has decided not to contest an immigration tribunal's decision in their favour.

Georgi Spasov, 29, and Dimitar Dimitrov, 43, could have faced six years in prison if they returned to Bulgaria after leading the first strike in the Bulgarian merchant navy. They had been among the 50 crew of a rusting factory ship that was off Shetland three years ago when the owner stopped paying wages.

Islanders came to their aid when the crew were found to be living in the rat-infested hulk on a diet of potatoes, and scouring local rubbish tips to find broken electrical goods to repair and sell. They had no fresh food, water or medication and at one point the ship's doctor was polling teeth with rusty pliers without the aid of anaesthetic.

In desperation, Mr Spasov and Mr Dimitrov helped to mastermind a strike,

which was settled after the intervention of the International Transport Federation. The remainder of the crew returned to Bulgaria and the two men sought political asylum in April 1995, with the help of the Scottish Refugee Council.

They were granted refugee status last October but the Home Secretary appealed. The Bulgarians won the appeal earlier this month and a ten-day period in which Mr Howard could lodge further action ran out last night.

The two men rent a flat together above the fish and chip shop in the village of Scalloway. They have been working as labourers since receiving work permits a year ago. Yesterday Mr Spasov said: "I want to thank the people of Shetland who gave us huge support even before the strike, when our shipowner abandoned us without wages, food, fuel or water."

Derrick Herring, a multilingualist who acted as the men's interpreter, said: "There will be a big celebration. The local people have very much taken them to their hearts."

Mr Dimitrov is divorced. Mr Spasov is unmarried. They are taking English classes and plan to stay on the island.

Their ship, the *Rotalia*, was among the 100 that arrive off Shetland every year to spend the winter processing fish. Moored around Lerwick, they comprise a floating town whose inhabitants often outnumber the residents of Shetland's main town.

Colin McKay, chairman of the local trades council who supported the two men, said: "They are absolutely delighted. It's been a long, traumatic time for them and for the whole of the population who supported them. If they had been sent back they would definitely have gone to prison. They were deemed to have embarrassed their government at a time it was looking to join the EC."

The support of Shetland has been tremendous from local toddler groups right through to the MP Jim Wallace and the MEP Winnie Ewing. If the Shetlanders had not taken up the cause, I think that the case may have fallen at the first hurdle or been unheard of.

"They've settled in very well and have adapted to the weather. I think they have a hankering to return to fishing and who knows, perhaps they will be on a boat again. Now they are just hoping to win the lottery like everyone else."

Six times over limit woman is jailed

A woman motorist who was six and a half times the drink-drive limit after she drank a bottle of vodka was jailed for four months and banned from driving for five years. Rosemary Foster, 23, of Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent, gave the highest breath test reading recorded by a woman.

Foster deliberately vomited over two police officers and threw scalding coffee at another. Macleod magistrates were told. Foster, who said she was upset at learning her father was dying from cancer, was found staggering on the M56 in Cheshire after her car ran out of petrol.

Pigs starved

A man aged 44 was being questioned yesterday over the discovery of 167 pigs thought to have starved to death, the RSPCA said. He was arrested after a raid on a farm near Canterbury, Kent, at the weekend. A further five pigs had to be put down.

Police warned

Hampshire police officers have been warned that they will face prosecution if they break traffic laws driving to reach a colleague who needs help. It is not one of the "exceptional circumstances" which justify the risk, senior officers have decided.

Courts gun alert

A pensioner was arrested yesterday while trying to enter the Royal Courts of Justice in London with an imitation Browning pistol. Last week a woman caused a security alert by holding up three Court of Appeal judges with a plastic gun.

Skiing death

The body of Duncan Gourlay, director of the Port of Blyth, Northumberland, is being flown back to Britain after his death in a skiing accident. Mr Gourlay, 46, was on holiday with his wife and son in Austria when he hit a tree on a downhill ski at Kirchfeld.

Highway robbery

Two men in balacavras who ambushed a late-night double-decker bus in Brighton forced the woman driver to hand over the cash box after opening the doors by pressing the emergency button. They fled with less than £50 in a stolen car later found burnt out.

BA libel appeal

The journalist Martyn Gregory lodged an appeal yesterday against a libel win by Brian Besham, the former public relations officer for British Airways. Mr Gregory was ordered to pay £20,000 damages last year over claims in his book *Dirty Tricks*.

Outbreak victim

A man aged 45 has died from legionnaires' disease following an outbreak at Corby, Northamptonshire. He was among 21 who have contracted the illness since last August. Health officials linked the outbreak with two local industrial estates.

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Port company convicted over ferry walkway deaths

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE company that operates the Port of Ramsgate in Kent was yesterday found guilty of failing to ensure the safety of passengers after a ferry walkway collapsed, killing six people.

Port Ramsgate Ltd was convicted, together with the two Swedish companies that manufactured and installed the high-level gangway, by a jury at the Central Criminal Court in London.

Mr Justice Clarke adjourned sentencing until February 26, when unlimited fines could be imposed. The highest penalty on record for a

charge under the Health and Safety at Work Act is £750,000.

Two Britons were among those killed when a steel pin securing the walkway came loose in September 1994. A further seven passengers were seriously injured as they plunged 30ft onto a steel platform. The verdicts leave the way open for claims for damages by injured passengers and victims' relatives.

The charges were brought by the Health and Safety Executive under the Health and Safety at Work Act. Hugh Carlisle, QC, for the prosecution, said that the design of the walkway was inherently unsafe and incompetent, making

it "an accident waiting to happen". He said inaccurate calculations, inferior steel and shoddy workmanship were direct causes of the accident.

Lloyd's Register of Shipping, which gave the walkway a safety certificate, has already pleaded guilty to a charge that it failed in its duty to check and guarantee the equipment.

The Swedish firms FEAB and FRAB were not present at the month-long hearing and, because Sweden was not a member of the EU when the accident happened, cannot be forced to pay any fine. However, the verdict effectively bars them from trading in the UK unless they do so.

Vanishing trick marks new show

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

MARK RADCLIFFE, the new presenter of Radio 1's breakfast show, closed his first programme yesterday by claiming his white van had been stolen from outside the BBC's studios while he was on air.

Radcliffe, who replaced Chris Evans on the show with the biggest radio audience in Britain, had promised to donate the van as a prize to the winner of a competition. The plan was apparently thwarted, however, when at 8.55am — a convenient five minutes before the end of his stint — he looked out of his studio window to the street and announced that the vehicle had disappeared.

Curiously, however, nobody at Radio 1 told the police or was able to give details of the van's registration number. A spokeswoman for Radio 1 refused to deny or confirm speculation that the "theft" was a publicity stunt.

Radcliffe, who used to host Radio 1's late night "indie" music show, seemed to have forgotten the theft entirely when asked afterwards what it was like presenting his first breakfast programme. He said: "It is obviously a bit

weird having worked late at night to be working early in the morning."

"We took some advice from a postman we know on how it affects you getting up at the crack of dawn and he said it's horrible at first, then you get used to it for a bit and then you go mad. You only have to look at the likes of Ant and Panto, Frank Bough and Eamonn Holmes to see that being cheerful early in the morning rots the brain."

Radcliffe, 38, who was broadcasting from Manchester with his sidekick Marc Riley, known as the Boy Lard, acknowledged the difficult task facing him in replacing Evans — who quit the show after he was refused Fridays off.

"We have to take care of the audience because the whole day on Radio 1 depends on us performing," Radcliffe said. "Personally I feel a bit nervous about that."

□ Evans is negotiating with Talk Radio about presenting a weekend sports show, the commercial station has said. It is understood that Evans, 30, has been offered a six-figure salary to host a football phone-in once a week.

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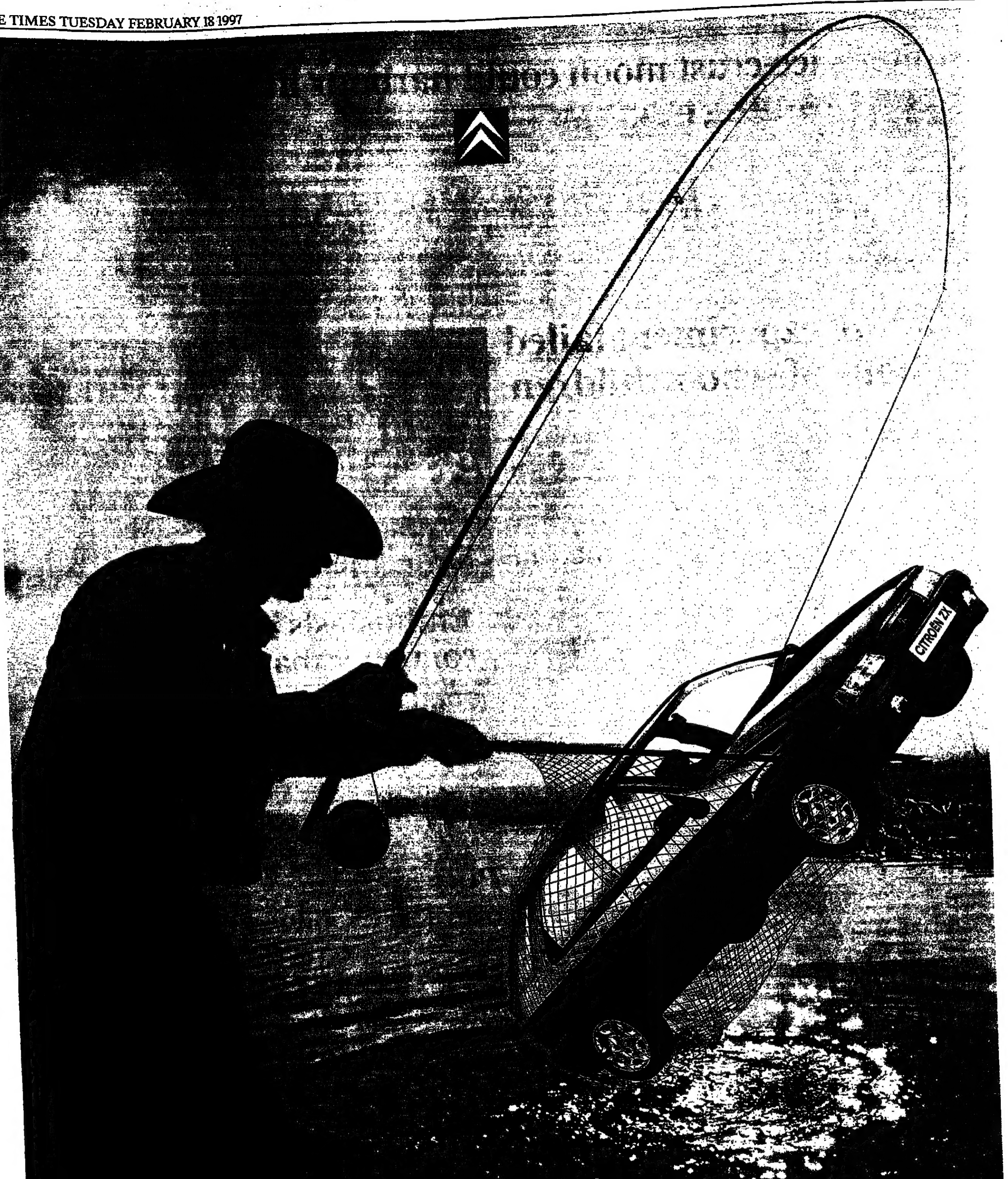
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مركزاً من راصم

من لامل

Jupiter's ice-crust moon could harbour life on ocean floor



Europa as photographed by the spacecraft Galileo

ONE of Jupiter's moons may be the best place in the solar system to search for evidence of life, scientists believe.

The ice-covered moon Europa, visited on Sunday by the spacecraft Galileo, is believed to possess deep oceans under the crust of ice. If pictures and other data from Galileo provide confirmation, pressure will mount for a full-scale exploration of the moon by robot spacecraft early next century.

Dr Eugene Shoemaker, of the US Geological Survey, told the American Association for the Advancement of Science that he believed that Europa's ocean was between 100km and 200km deep and covered by a layer of ice 10km thick. Volcanic activity at the bottom of the ocean would provide conditions

for life very like those at the hydrothermal vents at the bottom of the Earth's oceans, where heat and minerals from the mantle spilt out, creating an environment teeming with life.

Research with submersibles over the past 20 years has shown that these areas, once thought to be oceanic deserts, are inhabited by colonies of bacteria and by the Earth's fastest-growing invertebrates, the tube worms. Dr Richard Lutz of Rutgers University, New Jersey, told the meeting that at one such site on the East Pacific Rise he had found tube worms that had grown to 5ft in 20 months.

He had first visited the site, 14 miles below the surface off the west coast of Mexico, in 1991 in the middle of a volcanic eruption that

Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor, at the American Association in Seattle, hears that ocean floor activity on Europa could create an environment similar to the undersea volcanoes on Earth

destroyed all life forms. But on repeat visits over the next few years, he had seen it recover with dramatic speed. "It became a lush oasis in less than three years."

His observations have convinced astronomers that Europa is also likely to harbour life, so long as it possesses an ocean and volcanic activity. The meeting was told that there are good reasons for believing it has both.

Dr Steven Squyres, of Cornell University, said that the orbit of

Europa around Jupiter was elliptical, creating alternating stresses on the moon that caused it to flex as it orbited. This produced heat that could be enough to keep the water on the moon's surface from freezing solid.

Dr Shoemaker said that Europa's relatively unpopulated surface, with many fewer craters than Io, another Jovian moon, suggests it has been constantly reshaped by volcanic activity. The combination of liquid water and volcanoes

would reproduce almost exactly the same environment as that visited by Dr Lutz in the Pacific.

Dr John Delaney, of the University of Washington, said: "It is very difficult to say surely there will be life there but we know you can drill a hole anywhere on this planet and find bacterial life deep underground. It is beginning to look as if any planet with a reasonable brittle outer portion may have originated life. Life can start but whether it can evolve is a different matter."

Dr Squyres said that the recent discovery of a huge lake of water below the ice of Antarctica could provide a test bed for the techniques that will be needed to explore Europa. Lake Vostok, found by the Russians close to their base, lies under 4km of ice. Its

water is believed to have been undisturbed for millions of years.

Drilling into Lake Vostok would be easy but for the fear of contaminating it. The drilling fluids needed would mix with the water, destroying its scientific value. Scientists are puzzling how to complete the hole cleanly, in a rehearsal of what may one day be needed on Europa.

A number of proposals for exploring Europa have already been put to the American space agency, Nasa, and the money for such a mission is in the budget. The earliest a probe could leave would be 2001 or 2002.

To find life there, even if it was no more complex than a primitive bacterium, would be "an absolutely profound event in the history of human culture", Dr Delaney said.

Aristo

Reading experiment failed millions of schoolchildren

FROM NIGEL HAWKES IN SEATTLE, AND DAVID CHARTER

MILLIONS of schoolchildren have been unwitting guinea pigs in a failed experiment in teaching them to read, the American Association for the Advancement of Science was told. Tests had shown the controversial Real Books method did not work, researchers said.

The method asserts that learning to read is like learning to speak. It avoids explaining how letters on the page correspond to sounds and instead says that, given encouragement and books, children will acquire reading skills with the minimum of

direct instruction. Dr Barbara Foorman of the University of Houston reported on a trial in which 375 six and seven-year-olds from socially deprived backgrounds were divided into three groups and taught to read in different ways. The best result came from direct, systematic instruction in the alphabet, known as the phonics method; the worst from Real Books.

In the Real Books group, a third learnt to read no more than two and a half words over seven months — essentially no progress at all — and few learnt more than 15 words.

Among those given direct instruction, only 6 per cent did as poorly as two and a half words, and approached national averages on reading ability, far ahead of the other teaching methods tried.

The Real Books method was promoted by Frank Smith, an American educationist, writing in the 1970s and 1980s. A whole generation of children was caught up in the Real Books experiment, which was at its height in British schools in the early 1980s, when about one in ten pupils was taught exclusively by the method.

Critics argued that, in con-

trast with the phonics method, children suffered because they were given no structured grounding in English. Phonics requires children to sound out parts of words as they learn. In practice, teachers now favour a blend of methods based on the phonics approach.

Professor Mark Seidenberg of the University of Southern California said that the Real Books method, part of the Whole Language system that dominates American schools, had laudable goals — getting children to enjoy reading and appreciate great literature. But it ignored the major question of how a child learnt that the letters on the page corresponded to words and sentences.

"There is an overwhelming amount of research that contradicts the basic assumptions of Whole Language teaching," Professor Seidenberg said. "Learning to read is not like learning a first language. Reading involves an unusual, unnatural skill — learning to recognise strings of arbitrary printed symbols, what they mean and how they are pronounced. Whole Language assumes that children will just figure this out on their own."

Gillian Shepherd, the Education and Employment Secretary, is expected to act today to ensure that teachers learn at training college how best to use phonics and the other reading methods.



Professor Tom Kilburn inspects the replica of Baby, the pioneering computer he helped to build in 1948

Enthusiasts rebuild 7ft Baby computer that changed world

A PRIMITIVE forerunner of the personal computer has been rebuilt by a team of engineers as a fiftieth anniversary tribute to the unsung pioneers whose genius founded the electronic digital age.

The computer was officially born on June 21, 1948, when Tom Kilburn, a young research engineer, ran the first program through the Mark I machine, beating the Americans and making Manchester the birthplace of the computer.

The Mark I, or Baby as it came to be known, was the world's first electronic digital computer capable of storing a program. Its mass of cathode ray tubes and more than 500 valves were part of a machine that stood 7ft high and 18ft long. Volunteer computer archivists, led by Chris Burton, a retired engineer, have recreated over three years the earliest model of the Baby at Manchester Computing, part of Manchester University, several hundred yards from where it all began. The replica will be switched

A breakthrough in computing by a team of scientists in Manchester is at last being given recognition, Russell Jenkins reports

on in its own gallery at the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry in June next year as the centrepiece to the city's birthday celebrations of the computer age.

Mr Burton, of the Computer Conservation Society, was inspired to rebuild the Baby as a homage to the men he believes were as important as James Watt to the advent of the steam age. They were "modest, clever" men, he says, who never received the acclaim they deserved.

Mr Burton, a retired ICL computer engineer, from Oswestry, Shropshire, said: "The first objective is to recognise the achievement of men whose light has never been allowed to shine out. I want to make manifest a triumph of British innovation to counter the general misunderstanding that computers

were an American invention. They were not."

Another aim is to show today's computer-literate youngsters what it was like to be one of the handful of people with a vision of how information could be stored electronically, and to give them an idea of the conditions in which the pioneers worked. The equipment was always in danger of overheating and exploding.

Contemporary photographs show earnest, white-coated young men adjusting dials and checking cathode ray tubes. They were men like the late Professor Freddie Williams, who oversaw the project as holder of the Chair of Electrotechnics.

The guiding force behind Manchester's success was Tom Kilburn, a Yorkshireman then aged 26. He was

joined by Geoff Tootill, Dai Edwards, Alec Robinson and Tommy Thomas. They were following on from the work of Alan Turing on Colossus, the Second World War code-breaker based at Bletchley Park. In America, the ENIAC computing machine boasted 18,000 vacuum tubes (valves) but it could not store a program. They were in a race between Cambridge and the United States.

The Manchester team perfected the use of cathode ray tubes for storing data. The prototype had a memory of 1024 bits — tiny by modern standards.

Professor Williams once said: "A program was laboriously inserted and the start switch pressed. Immediately the spots on the display tube entered a mad dance. In early trials it was a dance of death leading to no useful result. But one day it stopped, and there, shining brightly in the expected place, was the expected answer. It was a moment to remember. Nothing was ever the same again."

- 1 The Lord of the Rings J.R.R. Tolkien
- 2 Nineteen Eighty-Four George Orwell
- 3 Animal Farm George Orwell
- 4 Ulysses James Joyce
- 5 Catch-22 Joseph Heller
- 6 The Catcher in the Rye J.D. Salinger
- 7 To Kill a Mockingbird Harper Lee
- 8 One Hundred Years of Solitude Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- 9 The Grapes of Wrath John Steinbeck
- 10 Trainspotting Irvine Welsh

THE 100 GREATEST BOOKS of the 20th CENTURY

How many HAVE YOU READ?

- 11 Wild Swans Jung Chang
- 12 The Great Gatsby F. Scott Fitzgerald
- 13 Lord of the Flies William Golding
- 14 On the Road Jack Kerouac
- 15 Brave New World Aldous Huxley
- 16 The Wind in the Willows Kenneth Grahame
- 17 Winesap-The-Pook A.A. Milne
- 18 The Color Purple Alice Walker
- 19 The Hobbit J.R.R. Tolkien
- 20 The Outsider Albert Camus
- 21 The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe C.S. Lewis
- 22 The Trial Franz Kafka
- 23 Gone with the Wind Margaret Mitchell
- 24 The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy Douglas Adams
- 25 Midnight's Children Salman Rushdie
- 26 The Diary of Anne Frank Anne Frank
- 27 A Clockwork Orange Anthony Burgess
- 28 Sons and Lovers D.H. Lawrence
- 29 To the Lighthouse Virginia Woolf
- 30 If This Is a Man Primo Levi
- 31 Lolita Vladimir Nabokov
- 32 The Waste Land T.S. Eliot
- 33 Remembrance of Things Past Marcel Proust
- 34 Charlie and the Chocolate Factory Roald Dahl
- 35 Of Mice and Men John Steinbeck
- 36 Beloved Toni Morrison
- 37 Possession A.S. Byatt
- 38 Heart of Darkness Joseph Conrad
- 39 A Passage to India E.M. Forster

- 40 Watership Down Richard Adams
- 41 Sophie's World Jostein Gaarder
- 42 The Name of the Rose Umberto Eco
- 43 Love in the Time of Cholera Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- 44 Rebecca Daphne du Maurier
- 45 The Remains of the Day Hilary Mantel
- 46 The Unbearable Automaticity of Being William S. Burroughs
- 47 Birdsong Sebastian Faulks
- 48 Howards End E.M. Forster
- 49 Bridlehead Revisited Evelyn Waugh
- 50 A Suitable Boy Vikram Seth
- 51 Dune Frank Herbert
- 52 A Prayer for Owen Meany John Irving
- 53 Perfume Patrick Suskind
- 54 Doctor Zhivago Boris Pasternak
- 55 Gormenghast Mervyn Pinche
- 56 Cider with Rosie Laurie Lee
- 57 The Bell Jar Sylvia Plath
- 58 The Handmaid's Tale Margaret Atwood
- 59 Testament of Youth Vera Brittain
- 60 The Magus John Fowles
- 61 Brighton Rock Graham Greene
- 62 The Ragged-Diapered Philanthropist Robert Tresselt
- 63 The Master and Margarita Mikhail Bulgakov
- 64 Tales of the City Armistead Mauphi
- 65 The French Lieutenant's Woman John Fowles
- 66 Captain Corelli's Mandolin Louis de Bernieres
- 67 Stargirl R.J. Palacio
- 68 Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance Robert M. Pirsig
- 69 A Room with a View E.M. Forster
- 70 Lucky Jim Kingsley Amis
- 71 It Stephen King
- 72 The Power and the Glory Graham Greene
- 73 The Stand Stephen King
- 74 All Quiet on the Western Front Erich Maria Remarque
- 75 Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha Roddy Doyle
- 76 Martinis Roald Dahl
- 77 American Psycho Bret Easton Ellis
- 78 Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas Hunter S. Thompson
- 79 A Brief History of Time Stephen Hawking
- 80 James and the Giant Peach Roald Dahl
- 81 Lady Chatterley's Lover D.H. Lawrence
- 82 The Bonfire of the Vanities Tom Wolfe
- 83 Complete Cookery Course Delia Smith
- 84 An Evil Cradling Brian Koppelman
- 85 The Raincoat D.H. Lawrence
- 86 Down & Out in Paris and London George Orwell
- 87 2001: A Space Odyssey Arthur C. Clarke
- 88 The Tin Drum Gunter Grass
- 89 A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich Alexander Solzhenitsyn
- 90 Long Walk to Freedom Nelson Mandela
- 91 The Selfish Gene Richard Dawkins
- 92 Jurassic Park Michael Crichton
- 93 The Alexandria Quartet Lawrence Durrell
- 94 Cry, the Beloved Country Alan Paton
- 95 High Fidelity Nick Hornby
- 96 The Van Roddy Doyle
- 97 The BBC Roald Dahl
- 98 Earthly Powers Anthony Burgess
- 99 I, Claudius Robert Graves
- 100 The Horse Whisperer Nicholas Evans

If you haven't read all the 100 greatest books of the century (as voted by Waterstone's customers and Channel 4 viewers), you've still got something to look forward to. If you haven't read most of them, you've got some catching up to do. If you've hardly read any of them, welcome to the twentieth century.

For an indication of where you might like to start, try the thoughts of Germaine Greer reviewing the list in "W" Magazine, available in all Waterstone's shops, priced £1.

While the greatest books of the century may be a source of riches, Waterstone's, you'll be pleased to know, won't impoverish you. From now until the end of February, you can buy any four titles from the list for the price of three. If you can't tick the books, at least you can tick the bookshop.

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Hogg's 'blunders' cost thousands of jobs, say Labour

By Polly Newton and James Landale

THOUSANDS of beef industry jobs have been lost because of the Government's "disastrous handling" of the BSE crisis, Labour said yesterday. Gavin Strang, the Shadow Agriculture Minister, accused Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, of exacerbating the crisis by making "blunders after blunders" in his attempts to secure an end to the European Union ban on British beef exports.

Mr Strang, speaking at the start of the Labour-initiated debate censuring Mr Hogg, said the minister had lost the confidence of the farming industry. "The purpose of this debate is to call him to account for his disastrous handling of the beef crisis," he said. "Farmers' livelihoods have been damaged. Thousands of jobs in the industry have been lost. Consumer confidence has been jeopardised and the credibility of the UK in Europe and beyond has been undermined."

Mr Strang said that the crisis had cost the Government more than £3 billion, about £130 for every taxpayer. "This Government was totally unprepared, had no strategy, had no contingency plan and yet BSE had been in our cattle since 1986 and yet they knew full well there was always a possibility of a link between BSE in our cattle and CJD in humans."

The Government had promised last June after the European summit in Florence that the beef ban would be lifted by November. "Last week, the position was that not a single item, not a piece of the ban had been lifted."

vent Scotland, Wales and England from moving ahead." Mr Hogg rejected the charges and accused Labour of doing "serious damage" to consumer confidence in British beef by repeating "the alarmist headlines of the tabloid press". He said the motion calling for a £1,000 cut in his salary, was "a cheap political stunt" for which Labour should be ashamed. "The inevitable consequence of a debate like this is that confidence in British beef will be damaged."

BSE had been a tragedy for beef producers and the greatest crisis British agriculture has ever faced. "But, because of the action taken, we are in a much better state than anybody in those dark days of last March would have supposed possible."

He said the Government had complied with all the conditions set out in the Florence agreement for a lifting of

the ban. It was now up to other EC countries to honour their side of the bargain.

"The ban is wholly unjustified; wrong in principle; wrong in law. It should never have been imposed. But, its removal is not within our gift."

Responding to a question from Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, Mr Hogg agreed there were strong arguments for herds in Northern Ireland to be certified as BSE-free, which he would put to the European Agriculture Commissioner, Franz Fischler. "The case for Northern Ireland is a very powerful one, and the Commissioner knows that, and he will find that I urge it."

Doug Hoyle (L, Warrington North) accused Mr Hogg of arrogance and pomposity, saying he blamed everyone but himself for the beef crisis. "This minister has lost the confidence, not only of this House, but he also failed to bring any agreement from Europe," he said.

The former Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd attacked the "ludicrous" Labour motion and expressed his warm admiration for Mr Hogg and his "frankness, courage and his sense of service". He attacked Labour for exploiting the BSE crisis for political advantage. "If there has ever been, in the history of this particular Parliament, a subject which is unsuited for constant party warfare, this is it," he said.

Labour's attack was based on ignorance and prejudice. "It deserves no support in this House and I think it will get no support in the country."

Paul Tyler, the Liberal Democrat agriculture spokesman, said farmers were rightly sceptical of the timing of the debate. "In the dying days of this Parliament this looks like a typical Westminster party game rather than a serious attempt to address the problems that the industry is facing at the moment."

Sir Michael Jopling, a former Tory Agriculture Minister, accused Labour of a cheap political stunt and said: "The Government and the minister have done their best."



Douglas Hogg leaving his home in central London for the Commons yesterday

Trimble making the most of his new importance

By Arthur Leathley

DAVID TRIMBLE'S brazen demands on behalf of Northern Ireland farmers yesterday reflected his increasingly direct method of dealing with the Tory and Labour leaderships. The potentially pivotal Commons role played by the nine Ulster Unionist MPs has given Mr Trimble, their leader, the opportunity to challenge each of the main parties to set out their policies on a range of Northern Ireland issues.

He has pressed for detailed responses on fishing quotas, the policing of Ulster marches, the export of beef

and the regulation of education in the province. He has held frequent meetings with Tony Blair in recent months and the two leaders are said to have a "warm working relationship".

Mr Trimble's discussions with John Major, once focused entirely on the peace talks, now frequently include other issues of fundamental importance to his party, such as fishing quotas and beef exports. Last month, Mr Major took the unusual step of overruling his ministers by bowing to the demands of Mr Trimble and other Ulster leaders to retain the education and library boards in North-

ern Ireland. The Prime Minister's intervention emphasised the new importance of what would previously have been seen as a parochial matter.

With its specific significance to Northern Ireland, beef policy has long been the Unionists' trump card. But even as Mr Trimble set down his demands in the Commons last night, he could not be confident of support from all of his eight MPs. The party has been split before in important Commons votes and Mr Trimble has been warned by colleagues not to overplay his hand in promising votes he cannot necessarily deliver.

Why the Tories have faith in a long campaign

By Peter Riddell

Labour wants an early general election and the Tories want a long campaign. This is what the pre-election skirmishing is all about. Little else in politics at present really matters. Yesterday's debate on BSE was a noisy irrelevance, apart from providing an opportunity for Labour to highlight a weak issue for the Tories and for the Ulster Unionists to play their favourite game of squeezing a vulnerable government. It was the politics of the bazaar.

Both main parties accept that the current manoeuvring is unreal. The Labour leadership is rather like a jittery, heavily tipped competitor before a race, having completed training and impatiently waiting for the off. Labour remains the overwhelmingly favourite, with no evidence of any significant erosion in its position according to the latest national polls. That is, paradoxically, just what is making Labour leaders nervous. They are worried that something could go wrong and frustrate their ambitions to return to office after so long.

Labour leaders fear that the Tories, aided by much of the press, will take a strongly sceptical line on Europe to frighten voters away from backing the opposition parties. The regular MORI polls for *The Times* show that Europe has moved up to about fourth in voters' ranking of the problems facing Britain today, while the focus group discussions of floating voters conducted by FCB for the *Financial Times* show that Europe has recently started to interest and worry this group.

The Tory approach is almost, but not exactly, the opposite. John Major's advisers believe that Labour's safety-first approach, especially on taxes and public spending, has started to unravel and that Mr Blair has begun to show the strain. Tory strategists believe, or rather hope, that Labour's cautious facade will come apart under further pressure. This appears to argue for a May 1 election, still the predominant Tory view,

and, indeed, the probable date.

But an important qualification is necessary. Some of Major's closest advisers believe that nothing decisive is likely to happen — or at least register in the polls — until the campaign formally starts and the public starts to focus on the choice of the next government. This can be seen in part as a rationalisation of the Tories' failure so far to make much impact on the Labour lead. These advisers argue that the key is a long campaign rather than necessarily a long pre-election period. This could be used to justify an April 10 election announced in a couple of weeks if the Government's position after the expected loss of the Wirral South by-election next week. I have never known a defending party write off a contest so early in the campaign, so that anything better than a wipe-out in Wirral South can be presented as the start of a Tory recovery. But the precise figures will be no pointer to what may happen in the general election, just as the Tory loss of Darlington was misleading in 1983.

However, much more likely is a five-week campaign starting at Easter and running up to May 1. Political scientists are divided on how much campaigns can alter the outcome. Voters do change their minds. But often this cancels out. The Tories may have lost office in February 1974 as a result of the campaign (though they won slightly more votes than Labour), while the Tories may have strengthened their position in the last few days in April 1992. This time, the Tories may be able to use a long campaign to frighten some wavering voters back to the fold. But there is no precedent for a campaign to produce as large a switch of votes as they now require.

PETER RIDDELL



Strang: said Hogg must be called to account



Hurd: praised his colleague's courage

Goldsmith to ignore vulnerable Forsyth

By Andrew Pierce

MICHAEL FORSYTH, the Cabinet minister most vulnerable to losing his seat at the general election, has been thrown a lifeline by Sir James Goldsmith.

Sir James has decided not to field a Referendum Party candidate against the Scottish Secretary, who is defending a 703 majority in Stirling. The decision has

surprised the Forsyth camp, because although he is a noted Eurosceptic and privately supports the call for a referendum on a single currency he is a loyal adherent of the Government's wait-and-see policy. "It was a complete mystery to us when we heard they were not standing," one Forsyth supporter said.

On Sunday Sir James reiterated his intention to field candidates against any

candidate who does not publicly support the call for a referendum. The other prominent Eurosceptics in the Cabinet, Michael Portillo and Michael Howard, both face a challenge.

The election will still be a struggle for Mr Forsyth, who is seen as a future Tory leadership contender. He faces a strong challenge from Labour and there is a UK Independence Party candidate.

Shephard keeps up attack over grammar schools

By Russell Jenkins

THE Education Secretary told the voters of South Wirral yesterday to beware of gaining a Labour government and losing their grammar schools. Gillian Shephard, making a by-election campaign visit to Wirral Grammar School for Boys, criticised the "hypocrisy" of Tony Blair and Harriet Harman for sending their children to grant-maintained schools. Ignoring the repeated assurances from David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, that the four grammar schools in the constituency would be safe under Labour, she said: "Make no mistake, if the Conservatives go, so does this school."

She added: "The Labour party cannot hide the sham and hypocrisy at the heart of their education policy. Tony Blair has chosen a grant-maintained school with an element of selection for his children. Harriet Harman has chosen a grant-maintained grammar school for her child."

Campaigning on Merseyside for Labour yesterday was Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor. He dismissed Mrs Shephard's claims and accused the Tories of having failed to help the young unemployed. "Many of the children

at the schools she is visiting today face a future of the dole. Instead of peddling lies about Labour she should be offering solutions for these young people."

Mr Brown visited McTay Marine shipbuilders, in Bromborough, where he spoke to some of the 107 workers there. Repeating his pledge to fund a youth welfare-to-work scheme using money raised by the windfall tax, he said that there were 605 people under the age of 25 unemployed in Wirral South, one in four of which had been jobless for more than a year. This cost the taxpayer £4.8 million a year, the equivalent of 241 extra police officers or 496 extra nurses.

According to the latest opinion poll in South Wirral, where the by-election will be held next week, Labour has a 12 percentage point lead over the Tories. But the survey, for the *Liverpool Echo*, shows that many voters have yet to make up their minds.

It puts Labour on 34 per cent, the Tories on 22 per cent and the Liberal Democrats on 8 per cent, with 33 per cent unsure or refusing to say.

Health followed by law and order then education are the issues which most concern the electorate. Crucially, slightly more than one in ten Conservative voters say that they are intending to switch to Labour.

1992 general election: Barry Porter (C, 25,500); Helen Southworth (Lab, 17,407); Ed Cummins (LD, 6,581). Majority: 8,163.

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THE TIMES TUESDAY FEBRUARY 18 1997

Motorway drivers face billing by electronic beam

By Jonathan Prynn, Transport Correspondent

DRIVERS face having to pay for using motorways by early next century after the development of "ray-gun" tolling technology.

Trials of the tolling system, which uses microwaves to detect and charge passing vehicles, are showing big improvements in reliability, although it is not yet in use anywhere in the world.

If the system goes ahead, every car using the motorways would have to be fitted with a dashboard meter costing £20-£30. The meter would be "read" by microwave beams emitted from overhead gantries. Motorists could pay either by charging up a smartcard or by receiving a monthly bill.

Cars without a meter or with no credit would be photographed by automatic cameras similar to speed cameras and the drivers would risk prosecution.

Early tests of the system in Germany revealed the equipment as highly inaccurate and thousands of motorists would have been charged for journeys they did not make. However, recent advances at the transport research laboratory in Berkshire suggested that only one car in 10,000 would be wrongly charged. Scientists on the project aim to reduce the figure to one in ten million.

The Government wants to introduce tolling to raise money for improving roads and to increase the cost of

motoring to persuade more people to use public transport. Critics have argued that the tolls would simply force traffic off the motorways on to untolled roads, leading to more congestion. Continental-style tolling booths have been ruled out because of the volume of traffic on British motorways and because of the land they take up.

Tim Wadsworth, a spokesman for the CEC-Marcos consortium, one of two working on the tolling system for British roads, said the technology was now so advanced that the sensors could detect and separately charge two cars driving bumper to bumper at 100 mph.

Patrick Clipperton, business development manager of Bosch Telecom, the rival consortium, said talks were going on in Brussels to introduce a unified system across Europe.

The technology could also be used by the police: each sensor can detect the size, make and speed of the cars passing the gantries. John Watts, the Roads Minister, who was visiting the trial site yesterday, said no decision had been taken on whether the police would have access to the data but would not rule it out.

Mr Watts said that if trials proved successful the technology would be tested on a stretch of the M3, near Basingstoke before a final decision was taken on whether tolling should go ahead. Lev-

els of tolls have not been set but when the policy was first announced by the Government in 1993, they were estimated at 1.5p per mile for cars and 4.5p per mile for heavy goods vehicles.

Mr Watts added that the tolls could be set at different levels at different times of day to discourage rush-hour traffic or to encourage lorries to travel at night.

Technical and legislative obstacles mean that tolling is unlikely to be introduced for about six years. However, motoring organisations are already claiming that Britain's 21 million drivers contribute far more to the Treasury's coffers than they get back through spending on roads. Labour has said that it would scrap the trials because the system would force traffic on to smaller roads.



A runway protester at the mouth of one of the tunnels yesterday: they are continuing to dig despite warnings

Gas blast warning to the runway Wombles

By Russell Jenkins

PROTESTERS living in tunnels at the site of Manchester airport's planned second runway have pledged to ignore a warning that digging could spark a methane gas blast.

Superintendent Kevin Hart of Greater Manchester Police said that the tunnellers — who often use candles for light — are on an old landfill site which produces the combustible gas naturally. "They have got to stop before there is a disaster. If they continue, someone is going to get killed."

The tunnellers deny that the site is landfill. One protester, a 23-year-old former health worker who calls himself Tobermory after a character from *The Wombles* television puppet series, said: "We are quite happy living in the tunnel and intend to carry on digging. We want to get bunk beds in there, electric lighting, radios and a kitchen unit. We want to turn it into a home."

It's a nasty habit.



A prototype meter on the windscreen is charged using a smart card. A "ray-gun" tolling system would deduct credit during motorway travel

Riches may buy a greater risk of tuberculosis

MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttford

WHEN recently the persistent symptoms of a pupil at Millfield, Somerset, were found to be caused by tuberculosis, people were amazed. Millfield is famed as an international school for those who excel academically or on the games fields, or whose parents have a healthy bank balance. The case illustrates that although TB is much more prevalent among the deprived, being comfortably off and the accompanying good nutrition do not guarantee immunity.

The greater opportunities enjoyed by the rich for travel to exotic but poverty-stricken locations may even expose them more to tuberculosis, both on the aircraft and at the destination. Although tuberculosis is extracted by an aircraft's air conditioning, there is evidence of direct spread from a coughing sufferer to any vulnerable passenger sitting near by.

The *Practitioner* recently carried an editorial by Peter Davies, of the Tuberculosis Research Unit at the Cardiothoracic Centre, Liverpool. Dr Davies quotes statistics showing that globally there are more deaths from TB than ever. TB claims three

million lives a year throughout the world, mainly from those whose existence could not present a greater contrast than to the life enjoyed at Millfield.

TB is endemic wherever there is overcrowding, malnutrition, poverty, war and HIV. A patient who is HIV-positive is more than 100 times more likely to catch tuberculosis than those who are free of the virus. In Liverpool's poorest areas, even people living in good housing, and who are presumably well-nourished, are ten times more at risk of developing tuberculosis than those living in richer areas. A homeless person living rough in Britain has the same chance of developing TB as does a patient with HIV.

In one case quoted by Dr Davies, a dying patient had been told that he had inoperable cancer of the lung, was given radiotherapy and was advised to marry his long-standing girlfriend, while there was still time. The patient had already married before someone took a closer look at the patient's sputum. The doctors found tuberculosis rather than the malignant cells they had been expecting. The patient made a good recovery but in other cases diagnoses are all too frequently made post mortem.

A return to the immediate postwar days is needed when doctors' suspicions were aroused when anyone had a persistent cough, weight loss and temperature. These symptoms may be commonplace, but if they last for more than six weeks they deserve investigation with a chest X-ray. Six months' treatment with appropriate antibiotics will clear most cases of TB, save the life of the victim and stop the disease spreading.

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Wife 'pleads with stricken Yeltsin to quit Kremlin'

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

BORIS YELTSIN'S wife, Naina, has added her voice to those calling for the President to resign. Russia's best-selling daily reported yesterday.

The report came amid growing doubts about his ability to return to full health and speculation that the Kremlin is preparing for the eventuality of his stepping down.

The report in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, which sells 1.5 million copies, was denied by a spokeswoman for Mrs Yeltsin, who dismissed it as "completely baseless". But its publication, after reports suggesting that Mr Yeltsin is considerably more ill than the official bulletins maintain, indicates that the revelations are being leaked by Kremlin officials.

Last week, Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist Party leader, in a bizarre shift from his much repeated demands for Mr Yeltsin's removal, spoke of the need to guarantee the President's "immunity from prosecution and decent conditions for life" if he retires. This new concern for Mr Yeltsin's well-being has prompted speculation that Mr Zyuganov may have been made privy to hitherto undisclosed intentions on the part of the President.

At the same time, a weekly newspaper, citing Kremlin sources, said Mr Yeltsin was

planning to resign in April. The report was denied by the presidential press service. But a distinct impression remained that some officials in President Yeltsin's circle were testing the waters.

The *Komsomolskaya Pravda* report quoted an unnamed source in the presidential administration as saying that Mrs Yeltsin had had a heated argument with her husband, during which she had said it was time for him to start thinking about his own welfare and go into retirement. But President Yeltsin is said to have responded sharply, telling her to mind her own business.

"I can tell you that no such conversation ever took place,"

said Nailya Konstantinova, for Mrs Yeltsin. "It is completely made up. Naina Yeltsina would not dream of interfering in politics or her husband's affairs, whatever her own opinion."

In past interviews, however, Mrs Yeltsin has made no secret of her concern that her husband could be over-exerting himself and has complained of his reluctance to listen to advice from family and doctors.

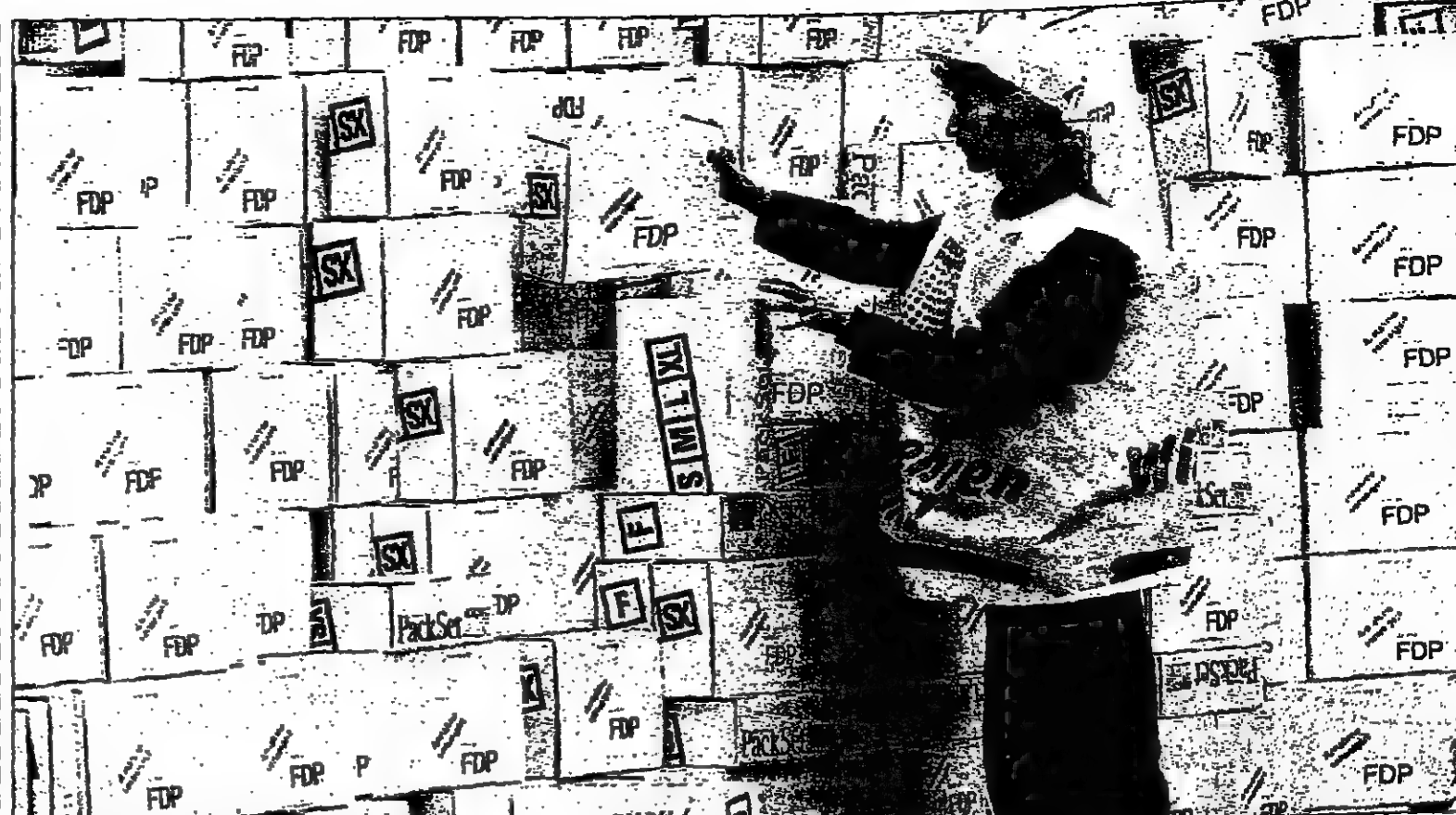
Yesterday Mr Yeltsin made another brief trip to the Kremlin from the country residence west of Moscow where he is convalescing. Television pictures showed him walking across a room to greet Igor Rodionov, the Defence Minister, and talking with him seated at a table.

Paris: Aleksandr Lebed began a five-day profile-raising trip to France by predicting the imminent collapse of the Russian political system, and obliquely comparing himself to General Charles de Gaulle (Ben Macintyre writes).

General Lebed, who was ousted as security chief by Mr Yeltsin and is ambitious to succeed the ailing leader, told his hosts that the "system represented by Russia's political establishment is condemned and rotting. Within a year, at most, it will vanish."



Naina Yeltsin: angry riposte from husband



A post office worker adding to a wall of parcels set up yesterday by 20,000 mail staff outside the Bonn headquarters of the Free Democratic Party, the liberal junior partner in the coalition Government of Helmut Kohl, in protest at plans to privatise Germany's postal services

Bonn resists US pressure on Iran

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

GERMANY and the United States crossed swords yesterday over Western policy towards Iran and Bonn's treatment of Scientologists.

At the latest stage of her European tour, Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, tried to play down differences with Klaus Kinkel, her German counterpart, and said they agreed on all critical issues, including NATO's eastward enlargement. But the areas of dispute were considerable. Herr Kinkel

came under pressure to sever relations with Iran, and other "rogue" states such as Iraq and Libya. But he stuck to the European policy of "critical dialogue". Much hinges on the Berlin trial of an Iran-backed team accused of killing Kurdish dissidents in a German restaurant. If they are found guilty and Tehran is implicated, Bonn has promised to review its policies.

Some of the differences arise because Germany needs to stay in line with

France, but the French idea that five Nato members should discuss enlargement with Russia, was pushed out of court by Ms Albright.

On Scientology, Bonn refuses to recognise it as a religion. Scientologists accuse Germans of treating them much as Nazi Germany treated Jews in the 1930s, but Ms Albright said comparison with what happened under Hitler "is historically inaccurate and totally distasteful". She said it remained a bilateral problem.

MP calls for Nazi gold talks

BY PETER CAPELLA IN GENEVA AND MICHAEL BINYON

A GROUP of British parliamentarians has called on Britain to organise an international conference to decide what to do about Second World War Nazi gold transfers.

The group led by Greville Janner, MP, also a vice-president of the World Jewish Congress, made the appeal after a meeting in Bern yesterday with officials from the Swiss Government and National Bank. Mr Janner said they had welcomed the proposal for the conference, which would decide how much gold was traded by Nazi Germany and where it came from, as a first objective. "The second is to consider whether funds can be made available, first for Holocaust survivors and their families and second to ensure there is never a future Holocaust," he said.

The Foreign Office said yesterday that it was too early to reply to Mr Janner's call. Before meeting Ben Gilman, chairman of the US House of Representatives International Relations Committee, in London yesterday, Mr Janner said he was confident that either Britain or America would host the conference. It would be cheaper and quicker if both countries supported it, with the Swiss.

"Swiss participation is essential. This could not operate without [their] active co-operation," he said. He was delighted that Flavio Cotti, the Swiss Foreign Minister, had given eager support to the idea.

Russia 'sabotaging Polish Nato entry'

FROM PATRICIA KOZA IN WARSAW

POLAND'S political elite was gripped by Russophobia yesterday amid accusations that Moscow's intelligence services are embarked on a massive campaign within Poland to block its entry into the European Union and Nato by compromising top politicians.

The allegations were made over the weekend by Zbigniew Siemiatkowski, a minister without portfolio who co-ordinates the operations of Poland's secret services. He said counter-intelligence had been monitoring stepped-up efforts by Russian diplomats to establish contacts with members of the left-wing ruling coalition — the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and the Peasant Party, both with communist roots — as well as the Solidarity-based opposition. "We should expect huge provocations from the Russian intelligence service," said Mr Siemiatkowski, himself a member of the SLD. "They

will try to show... the political elites of these countries are not reliable and that they are corrupt and at the disposal of their former masters."

Mr Siemiatkowski is in Germany for four days to discuss the issue with German intelligence, counter-intelligence services and the chairman of the Bundestag intelligence oversight committee. The trip coincides with a stop in Germany by Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, to discuss Nato expansion.

The opposition centre-right Freedom Union, suspecting a political motive for Mr Siemiatkowski's remarks, demanded proof: he said that he would gladly provide it to parliament when appropriate. Moscow's foreign intelligence service yesterday denied its agents were trying to thwart Polish entry into Nato and the EU, calling the idea "absolute fantasy". (AP)

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Beijing chiefs meet as rumours spread about ailing Deng

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

CHINESE leaders were recalled urgently to Beijing at the weekend to meet what senior diplomats said was a "potential emergency situation".

There was no immediate information from Chinese official sources what the problem might be. European diplomats speculated last night that the health of Deng Xiaoping, the senior Chinese leader, may have taken a turn for the worse or that the confrontation between North and South Korea had caused serious concern among the Chinese leadership.

In the past two days, there have been unconfirmed reports that the 93-year-old Mr Deng had suffered a stroke. At the same time, tension has mounted over the defection of a North Korean leader in Beijing.

President Jiang Zemin, the Chinese party chief, and Li Peng, the Prime Minister, have reportedly both returned to Beijing over the past two days and apparently visited the residence of Mr Deng, the architect of the reforms that have transformed the Chinese economy in the past 15 years.

Diplomats say that the Chinese leaders are also concerned over the position of Hwang Jang Yop, the North Korean who has sought sanctuary in South Korean diplomatic quarters in Beijing.

North Korean agents who have been surrounding the South Korean consulate in the San Li Tun diplomatic sector of Beijing have been withdrawn. Western diplomatic sources said this was clearly as a result of Chinese pressure

on the North Koreans to avoid a situation that looked like erupting into violence and bloodshed.

The new generation of Chinese leaders under President Jiang has insisted that it is fully in control of the nation of more than 1.2 billion people.

But there is a sense that the leadership feels the death of Mr Deng would produce a kind of vacuum that it might not be able to contain.

Though the situation in Beijing remained outwardly calm in the hours up to midnight last night, there was considerable worry in diplomatic quarters that China might be facing a crisis of major proportions.

It was an anti-climax for both Sobhraj and the hordes of journalists and onlookers waiting outside the courthouse, accompanied by about 200 policemen and riot police.

Freedom eludes ace jailbreaker

FROM COOMI KAPOOR IN DELHI

FREEDOM was short-lived for Charles Sobhraj, a murderer and cheat who has been in and out of prison for nearly three decades. Released on bail yesterday by Prem Kumar, the Delhi Metropolitan Magistrate, after completing his latest sentence — for a jail break — he was rearrested within minutes for not possessing valid identification papers.

It was an anti-climax for both Sobhraj and the hordes of journalists and onlookers waiting outside the courthouse, accompanied by about 200 policemen and riot police.

Rajan Bakshi, Sobhraj's counsel, who was about to escort him to the French Embassy in Delhi to get his identification papers, filed a case for contempt of court over the rearrest. However, the Foreigners Regional Registration Office said that it was detaining Sobhraj for two weeks under the registration

Act, which the magistrate said was outside his jurisdiction. Two international best-sellers, *Serpentine* and *The Life and Crimes of Charles Sobhraj*, have been written about the bespectacled 45-year-old son of a Vietnamese mother and French father who has a Sikh stepfather. A shrewd handler of the press, he gets his photograph in newspapers whenever he makes one of his frequent court appearances. There has

been a media debate in India over a tendency to glamorise criminals. The fascination with Sobhraj is based on both his exotic origins and his exploits; he has escaped six times from high-security jails. He has made a living throughout South East Asia and in Greece and India by drugging tourists, then stealing their valuables and passports. Some of his victims have died of drugs overdoses.

Book names Australian sex offenders

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

A DIRECTORY of convicted child abusers due to be launched in Australia today may soon have a British edition, its publisher said last night.

The *Australian Paedophile and Sex Offender Index*, which names hundreds of men, and some women, found guilty of sex crimes in Australia over the past five years, follows the publication of a similar book in New Zealand. The earlier directory was condemned by civil liberties groups and social workers who claimed

child molesters would become targets of violence or revenge attacks. Similar criticism has been levelled at the Australian edition, which has itself attracted death threats.

But Deborah Coddington, the author, defended the directory, claiming it had "changed the attitudes of many people, who were previously unaware of the seriousness of sex crimes against the vulnerable". She said that the book had led to wider media coverage of such crimes and meant "judges have been less eager to suppress names of offenders, and sentences are getting tougher". The 330-

page *Index* includes photographs of 31 convicted child molesters. Ten of them were priests and most of those listed were repeat offenders.

Inquiry suicide: A former school principal accused of remaining silent about sexual abuse by one of his teachers has killed himself 24 hours before he was due to testify to a royal commission investigating paedophilia, police in Sydney said. The teacher, codenamed T9, was said to have sexually abused girls at two schools for 20 years, despite complaints by alleged victims and other teachers. (AFP)

Saddam's son 'needs left leg removed'

FROM MICHAEL THEODOROPOULOS IN NICOSIA

THREE Cuban doctors treating the elder son of President Saddam Hussein of Iraq have asked permission to amputate his left leg above the knee, dissidents claimed yesterday.

Uday's knee was "completely smashed" when gunmen ambushed his car while he was driving through a smart Baghdad suburb in December, said the Jordan-based Iraqi National Accord.

"The doctors suggested amputating the knee and fitting him with an artificial leg. It seems they are waiting for a decision from Saddam himself," said Haroun Mohamad, a spokesman for the group in Amman.

Other Iraqi sources said the Cuban team, which brought its own mobile operating theatre, arrived in Baghdad from Iran at the beginning of February and is led by the personal doctor of Fidel Castro, the Cuban President. The surgeon, whom they identified only as Dr Cardenas, was said to have treated the Iraqi leader during the 1980s.

"It now looks like Uday will live. The question is, will he ever be fit enough to be considered the heir apparent again? You can't rule Iraq from a wheelchair," said one Iraqi businessman.

It has also been reported that two of the 14 bullets that hit Uday are still lodged in his spine and that French doctors who travelled to Baghdad were afraid to remove them for fear of causing total paralysis or death. France has rejected an Iraqi request to admit Uday for treatment.



Uday: two bullets still in his spine

Korean defector 'lists dissidents'

FROM ROBERT WHYMAN IN TOKYO

THE senior North Korean defector announced in the South Korean mission in Beijing is said to have given the US Central Intelligence Agency the names of several other top North Korean officials planning to defect.

The South Korean newspaper *Dong-A Ilbo* said yesterday that Hwang Jang Yop told a CIA official that as many as seven high-ranking officials were seeking a chance to flee the North.

The newspaper said that Mr Hwang held talks for about 35 minutes with the US intelligence official last Wednesday at the consular section of the South Korean mission, soon after arriving there to seek asylum.

Mr Hwang, known as a close adviser to Kim Jong Il, the North Korean leader, is said to have told the CIA that he hopes eventually to settle in South Korea, but would be prepared to go briefly to the United States in the first instance. The South Korean Foreign Ministry dismissed

the press report as being without foundation. North Korea said that it would dismiss Mr Hwang if he sought asylum. The official KCNA news agency quoted the Foreign Ministry as saying that, if he had been kidnapped, then North Korea would take "decisive counter-measures". However, "if he sought asylum, it means that he is a renegade and he is dismissed".

In the meantime, Seoul officials said that a prominent North Korean defector attacked by a suspected North Korean assassination squad remained in a coma yesterday. Li Il Nam, nephew of Kim Jong Il's former wife, was shot and seriously wounded by two gunmen in Seoul on Saturday.

South Korean authorities have said that the attack may have been retaliation by North Korea for Mr Hwang's defection. Pyongyang claims that Mr Hwang was abducted by South Koreans and is being held against his will in Seoul's consular office in Beijing.

Hong Kong warning on investors

FROM JONATHAN MURPHY IN HONG KONG

ONE of China's staunchest supporters in Hong Kong warned Beijing and Tung Chee-hwa, the Hong Kong Chief Executive-designate, yesterday that attacks on the colony's Bill of Rights and the possibility of a subversion law may frighten off foreign investors.

Alfred Lee, a member both of the elected Legislative Council and Beijing's hand-picked Provisional Legislative Council, said: "Foreign investors are used to the rule of law. That is why they are careful about investing in China. They are asking questions now about the rule of law here. They see certain laws being changed now and they wonder what is going to be changed tomorrow. [Mr] Tung has to face up to this."

He said that when Mr Tung visits America this spring he will face hard questioning on political developments in Hong Kong. Mr Lee was an early champion of Mr Tung and regards him as "an honest man and very conservative". But he disagrees with Mr Tung's view that the law on demonstrations must be changed to avoid "disorder and instability". Mr Lee said Mr Tung "has to understand you cannot suppress people. If he does not stand up to Beijing, we are in serious trouble." He added: "Anyway, Beijing cannot fire him. He has five and a half years to stand up for Hong Kong."

Hardliners demand Jewish housing in east Jerusalem

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE Middle East peace process came under severe threat yesterday as hardliners within the ruling Israeli coalition mounted pressure for the building of a massive new Jewish neighbourhood in occupied east Jerusalem, fiercely opposed by the Palestinians.

Binyamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, flew back into the storm from his trip to Washington and was forced to issue a denial of reports that he had promised President Clinton to delay work on the site at Har Homa, due to contain 6,500 housing units for Jewish families.

David Bar-Ilan, Mr Netanyahu's Communications Director, said that, contrary to reports of a postponement, a decision on going ahead with the new Jewish housing district could be taken at a ministerial committee as early as today. "My feeling is that it is going to be in the very near future," he told Israeli radio.

Mr Bar-Ilan was questioned about reports from government sources that the Shin Bet security service had warned Mr Netanyahu that, if the building of Har Homa went ahead, Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, would carry out his threat to stir up disturbances worst than those prompted by the Temple Mount tunnel last September. Clashes then left 75 people dead and 1,500 wounded.

"I believe that no government can live under the threat of such incidents," Mr Bar-Ilan responded. "If the Palest-



Map of Jerusalem showing the location of Har Homa.

ment when peace appeared on track — and if he delays, he could be toppled by a right-wing revolt."

Michal Eitan, the Likud backbencher leading the revolt, claimed last night that 28 coalition deputies were behind his campaign for an immediate start to construction at Har Homa. "If this Government will do nothing to fulfil its right-wing ideology, then maybe there is no use for this Government," he threatened.

Ministerial support for construction to go ahead came from, among others, Ariel Sharon of Likud, the former war hero, Rafael Eitan, leader of the hardline Tsomet Party, and Natan Sharansky, the former Soviet refusenik. Livnor Livnat of Likud, the only woman in the Cabinet, said: "We have got to build in Har Homa, although it might bring some negative reactions from the Palestinians and Americans."

Jerusalem's Mayor, Ehud Olmert, a leading member of Likud, said he would send bulldozers to Har Homa, close to two Palestinian villages, within days if it was proved true that plans to start work there had been frozen.

Reflecting the deep disillusion felt by many Israeli rightwingers, Mr Olmert said: "This Government exists on the basis of a parliamentary majority, and I find it difficult to believe there will be a majority for a policy that does not fulfil detailed commitments on Jerusalem."

Senior Western diplomatic sources said that the project was so controversial that, if building was sanctioned just a month before Israel and the Palestinians are due to reopen long-delayed talks on the final status of Jerusalem, the negotiations could be sabotaged before they began.

"Netanyahu is caught between a rock, and a hard place," said one European diplomat. "If the building goes ahead, he could face a new Palestinian revolt at the mo-

Pakistan leader puts peace offer to India

Islamabad: Nawaz Sharif was sworn in as Pakistan's Prime Minister yesterday and promptly pledged to root out corruption (Zahid Hussain writes).

Mr Sharif, 43, offered India an olive branch and said that Pakistan was ready to take a step forward to end tension in the subcontinent. "There is a need for a reconciliation in South Asia,"

he said. "The initiative has to come from both sides and I hope India will reciprocate Pakistan's gesture." For the past three years, talks between the two countries have come to a halt.

The new Prime Minister, who was endorsed by 177 votes in the 217-seat National Assembly, gave an assurance that his Government would not victimise the opposition.

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China 'uses 1,000 US firms for espionage'

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

AMERICAN intelligence is reported to have identified about a thousand companies in the United States being used by the Chinese either for spying or illicitly acquiring American technology.

A report in *Newsweek* yesterday also said that an FBI task force investigating John Huang, the former Commerce Department official at the centre of the Democratic fundraising scandal, was seeking to discover whether he was an agent of Beijing.

The appointment of an independent counsel to the inquiry, which includes government agencies, seemed increasingly inevitable last night as Republicans issued further subpoenas for documents amid growing concerns of a "China connection".

At its most serious, Congress is questioning whether foreign interests bought policy favours in Washington. Even the faintest suggestion that China may join the growing cast of characters associated with the scandal over the President's fundraising would be personally damaging to Mr Clinton.

Last week, Bob Woodward, America's indefatigable investigative journalist and the man who unearthed the Watergate scandal, claimed electronic surveillance by the Justice Department had revealed that the Chinese Em-

bassy in Washington was used to channel illegal Asian donations to help Mr Clinton's re-election. The embassy has denied the allegation but an investigation into what could amount to counter-intelligence has again centred on Mr Huang, who first met Mr Clinton in Little Rock, Arkansas, while he was an employee of the Lippo Group, the Indonesian conglomerate owned by the Risydy family.

Lippo has maintained close business and political ties with China and, according to the magazine, sold 15 per cent of its stake in a Hong Kong bank to a company owned by the Chinese Government four days after the President was elected in 1992.

The company, China Resources (Holding), has been identified by American intelligence as a routine front for spy operations run from Beijing. Investigators believe that Mr Huang may have become a Chinese surrogate, perhaps even unwittingly.

A senior Justice Department official said yesterday that even if the Chinese Embassy had been used for planning party contributions there was no sense that the electronic surveillance mentioned by Mr Woodward would implicate any individual. "It's not as if they have got John Huang on the phone," he said.

But the intelligence services are focusing on nearly 1,000 companies being used by the Chinese. It is unclear how many have been targeted for espionage or for the illegal acquisition of technology.

The Clinton Administration, eager for positive engagement with China, is said to have ignored the complaints of its own intelligence agencies. The White House has continued to deny any connection between illegal contributions, since returned by the Democrats, and influence on policy. "The President acts in the best interests of this country," said Lanny Davis, Mr Clinton's special counsel.

Democrats rule in Disneyland

Washington: The Walt Disney company joined other firms and trade unions as the biggest single givers of political donations in the 1995-96 US election cycle, a study has found. Republicans gained more than Democrats, although Walt Disney was generous to Democrats, giving them more than half its total \$1,359,500 (\$839,000) political contributions. (AFP)

Gala birthday party for Liz Taylor, 65, before tumour operation



Showing up for Liz Taylor's 65th birthday evening were, from the left, actresses Salma Hayek, Elizabeth Hurley — in her "string bag" — and Christine Baranski

Stars shine for Tinseltown 'godmother'

FRIENDS of Elizabeth Taylor packed a Hollywood theatre to wish the actress a happy 65th birthday, shortly before she undergoes surgery on a brain tumour. It was an evening of weepy tributes, glowing smiles and such sugary sweetness that diabetics were best advised to stay at home.



Hollywood threw a \$1 million party for Elizabeth Taylor, full of weepy tributes, and so sugary sweet that diabetics were advised to stay at home, writes Quentin Letts

The film business turned out in force, dressed to impress. The British actress Liz Hurley pitched up in a creation that offered as much cover as a string bag and her sidekick, Hugh Grant, opened the show. "What a body of work, let's face it, what a body," he quipped (referring in fact to Miss Taylor), to shrieks of laughter.

There were assorted musical turns. "Elizabeth, I love you," sang that odd little man Michael Jackson, whom Miss Taylor has long treated as a favourite son. The ballad — which included the rum line "they robbed you of your childhood" — had been

composed specially for the night. "You are so beautiful," crooned Rod Stewart, directing his welder's eyes at the birthday girl, who wore green and flashed her violet eyes with delight.

As every guest knew, however, the legendary Miss Taylor, whom Tinseltown regards as its special godmother, is in poor health. The brain tumour, said to be benign and discovered only a fortnight ago, follows a long list of ailments, from bad backs to hip replacements to ferocious drink and weight woes. There have been drugs, too — not least of them, as

one wit recently remarked, being mashed potato and gravy.

She was to have entered hospital yesterday for the operation, but it was delayed owing to a cold.

Sunday's show was a charity fundraiser, drawing \$1 million for the fight against Aids, a charitable enterprise with which Miss Taylor has long associated herself and for which she has been rewarded with a 'loyal following in the homosexual community. Before she became a gay icon and a pusher of her own name-brand scent, she did good work in the acting

world, as Sunday night's audience was reminded with clips from her past roles, like the Oscars for *Butterfield Eight* (a film she actually disliked) and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* But more than mere artistic talent, or even the seven husbands, Liz Taylor has always had star quality, which is why she endures.

Others attending the party included Harry Connick Jr., the magician David Copperfield (who made her 33-carat diamond ring vanish), and Roseanne Barr (dressed as a portly Cleopatra). Madonna told the guests: "When I was a little girl I wanted to be as beautiful as Elizabeth Taylor... I wanted to have a 16-inch waist so that Montgomery Clift, Rock Hudson and Paul Newman could put their arms around me."

To complete the festivities, the star of Hollywood Boulevard has been renamed Elizabeth Taylor Way.

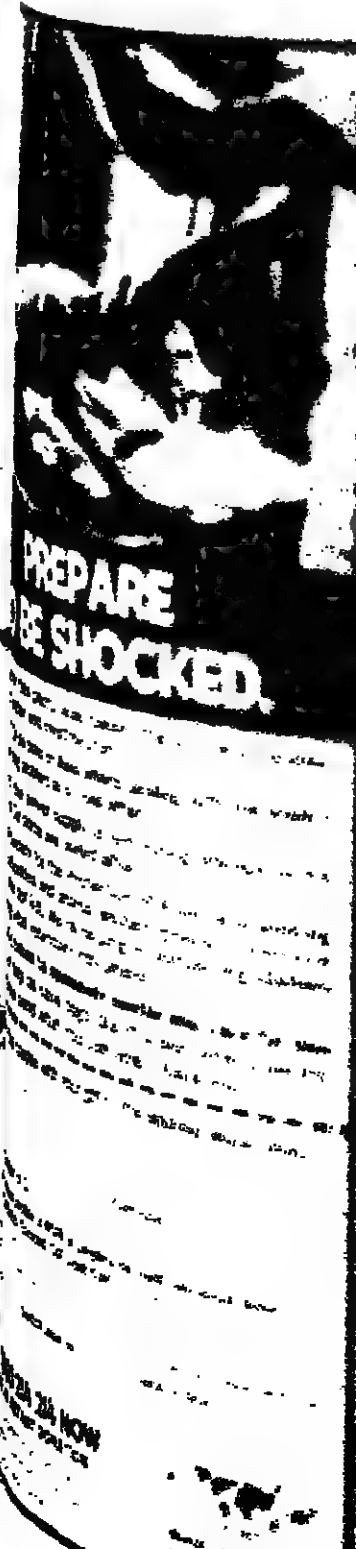


Jackson: composed a ballad for the party

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Mexico drug lords 'aided by brother of former President'

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON AND DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

INVESTIGATORS in America have powerful new evidence that Raúl Salinas de Gortari used his position as the older brother of Mexico's former President to protect his country's most powerful and ruthless drug traffickers, according to court documents published in Mexico.

If the papers, published by *Proceso*, a respected Mexico City weekly news magazine, are authentic, they will establish a pattern of ties — closer than previously shown — between Raúl Salinas, high-ranking Mexican government officials, and Mexico's most notorious drug traffickers and money launderers.

The five pages of documents published on Sunday appear to implicate Señor Salinas in arranging payments to protect the drug trade. The witness statements are apparently part of evidence collected by US prosecutors for the trial next month in Houston, Texas, of a former Mexican Deputy Attorney-General, Mario Ruiz Massieu, accused of taking money from traffickers.

The US Government seized \$9 million (£5 million), which it is seeking to confiscate, in March 1995 from accounts belonging to Señor Ruiz Massieu, who is now under house arrest in New Jersey after fleeing Mexico where he is wanted on charges of embezzlement and obstruction of justice. His duties as Deputy Attorney-General included overseeing the prosecution of drug traffickers. He said that

the \$9 million were family savings.

Since Carlos Salinas de Gortari, President from 1988 to 1994, left office, there have been flurries of unconfirmed stories that he, his brother and senior officials had links to drug dealers and helped to protect the trade in exchange for cash. Both Carlos and Raúl Salinas have denied the stories. Neither has been charged with drug violations. In Mexico City yesterday, a lawyer for former President Salinas said that the legal action against those spreading accusations linking him and his family to drug barons.

Raúl Salinas has been in jail since early 1995, charged with masterminding the murder of Señor Ruiz Massieu's brother, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu — a leader of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party — in September 1994. After his arrest, investigators discovered Raúl Salinas had stashed more than \$150 million in bank accounts in Switzerland and other European countries using various false identities. He claims the money was from successful private investments.

The documents also appear to record social meetings between drug dealers and Carlos Salinas. One FBI informant claims that Carlos Salinas, while President, went to parties at Raúl Salinas's ranch near Monterrey that were attended by Juan García Abrego, a drug trafficker.

Abrego, arrested early in the term of Mexico's current President, Ernesto Zedillo, was jailed for life by US courts and ordered to pay \$500 million in fines for smuggling tons of cocaine into the US.

Juan Velázquez, the former President's lawyer, has called the *Proceso* report "absolutely absurd". US officials have yet to confirm the documents' origin, although *The Washington Post* yesterday quoted an FBI spokesman as saying that, based on a photograph in the magazine, they appeared authentic. *Proceso* notes that when it received the report, large sections had been deleted.

If the documents are authentic they paint a devastating picture of the official protection enjoyed by drug cartels. However, the witnesses, some in jail, may be tainted by their drug ties and could face accusations of concocting evidence to plea-bargain for their own freedom.

Last month, in his first lengthy interview with a Mexican newspaper since Raúl Salinas was jailed, the disgraced former President defended his brother, saying he did not believe the murder charges against him. However, he was careful to distance himself from his brother's financial affairs, acknowledging that his enormous wealth bore little relation to his official government salary.

He told a Mexico City newspaper, *Reforma*: "I can assure you that, whatever their origin, those funds have no relation with any action taken in my administration through my direct decisions or instructions."

Many Mexicans believe that the involvement with the drug trade of senior officials in the Institutional Revolutionary Party may be the key to solving a number of high-profile murders in 1994, including the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, the party's presidential candidate.

However, the public remains deeply sceptical, saying the investigations will be buried in a morass of official incompetence and corruption.



Donald Trump, left, the multimillionaire property developer, is having his work cut out in his legal fight with Vera Coking, right. She owns a rundown three-storey boarding house in Atlantic City and he wants the land

Seaside landlady plays Trump card in battle against casino takeover

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

A DIMINUTIVE Egyptian widow is locked in a legal battle with Donald Trump, the multimillionaire New York property developer.

Vera Coking, 72, in her socks, is contesting a demolition order that has been made on her old boarding house in Atlantic City, New Jersey. It stands next to one of Mr Trump's casinos and he wants to pull it down so that he can expand his business.

Mrs Coking, 72, is refusing to budge, at least until Mr Trump makes her a hefty offer on her three-storey, 22-room rundown house. Amid the glittering superstructures of Atlantic City it stands out as a reminder of the past, when the city was an unsuccessful seaside town. Next door is the Trump Plaza, a modern glass and steel edifice. The widow,

dubbed "Donald Trump's ulcer", is demanding a minimum of \$1.5 million (£926,000) for her property and is claiming \$126,000 in compensation after alleged damage to the house by Trump contractors. Mr

spent more than an hour in the witness box in a local court on the matter. He and his associates denied causing any intentional damage to the house when they started to break the adjoining ground. Mrs Coking is not popular

the court and duly went through half the contents as she dabbled her eyes. "I raised my kids in here and my house was a beautiful place before they damaged it."

For encouragement she can perhaps look to Manhattan in the 1920s, when a determined Irish saloon keeper called Hurley refused to sell out to the property developer, John D. Rockefeller, who was then developing the area. Rockefeller eventually had to yield to the publican and built his mighty Rockefeller Centre around the tiny bar.

To this day, Hurley's tavern stands alongside the vast skyscrapers of Manhattan's Avenue of the Americas, thriving on custom from the office blocks and worth many times more than its original owner was offered.

"We are rebuilding Atlantic City. The future of this city is not Vera Coking's boarding house"

Trump, who considers \$251,000 to be the fair price for the site, has responded by securing a condemnation order, which Mrs Coking is fighting in the courts.

Last week Mr Trump, for whom every minute in the day is a chance to make millions,

with the local authorities. James Whelan, Mayor of Atlantic City, said: "We are rebuilding Atlantic City. The future of this city is not Vera Coking's boarding house."

"There's a lot of memories in here," said Mrs Coking, who produced a box of tissues in

Pledge on currency by Bonn

Brussels: Germany yesterday brushed aside doubts over qualifying for monetary union, pledging to cap its budget deficit despite fast-rising unemployment (Charles Bremner writes).

Jürgen Stark, the State Finance Secretary, was irked at an EU finance ministers' meeting when Kenneth Clarke urged Europe to move more quickly to follow Britain's economic management model.

Zaire attack

Kalemie: Zairean government aircraft launched an air raid on the rebel-held town of Bukavu, killing six people and wounding at least 20, aid workers said. (AP)

West's problem, page 18

Juppé warning

Paris: Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister, criticised French intellectuals and artists, saying their civil disobedience campaign against immigration laws played into the hands of the far-right National Front.

Dogfight arrests

Athens: Police in the northern Greek town of Beria arrested 16 people on charges of organising a dogfight in which two deliberately starved pitbulls were set against each other.

Eta blast death

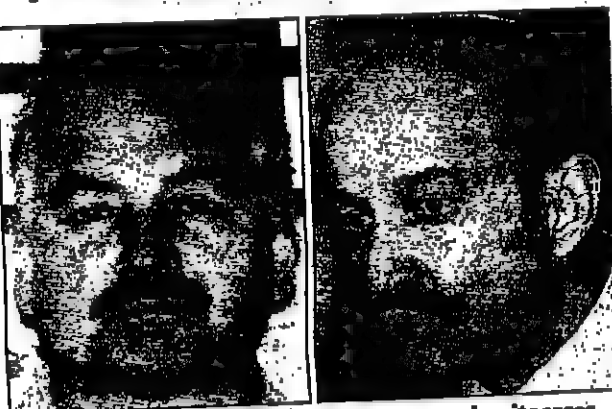
Madrid: Eta separatist guerrillas struck for the fourth time in a week in Spain, killing a policeman with a car bomb. The device exploded as he left his home in the northern city of Bilbao. (Reuters)

Hostage record

Lima: Marxist guerrillas were still holding 72 dignitaries in the Japanese Ambassador's residence here, dragging the siege into its sixty-third day — the longest hostage ordeal in Latin American history.

Mainlining

Brussels: Belgian police and customs arrested seven people and seized 1,160lb of cocaine with a street value of £3 million hidden in a shipment of railway sleepers, the Belgia news agency said. (Reuters)



Raúl, left, and Carlos Salinas de Gortari: witnesses say the two had links with Mexico's drug barons

Goldmans launch book on the pursuit of OJ

FROM GILES WHITFIELD IN LOS ANGELES

THE family of Ronald Goldman have said they would sit through a third trial if it would put O.J. Simpson behind bars. Ignoring signs that America may have had enough of the Simpson affair, the murdered

man's mother said at the weekend: "If we could have another trial and put him [Simpson] in jail, yes, we would do it."

Patti Goldman was joined by her husband, Fred, and stepdaughter, Kim, in a New York hotel to launch their book about their son. His name is Ron: Our Search for

Justice is a 350-page paean to the young waiter whose throat was slashed when he visited Nicole Brown on June 12, 1994. "He put himself in a different persona and he committed these crimes," Kim Goldman said of Mr Simpson, who was found liable for the two deaths last week. "He's so far gone, deep down, that he probably

thinks he didn't do it." According to yesterday's *Newweek* magazine, Mr Simpson plans to leave Los Angeles and move to Florida, where the proceeds from the sale of his \$3.7 million (£2.3 million) Brentwood mansion will still be subject to seizure by the plaintiffs, but any new house he buys will not.

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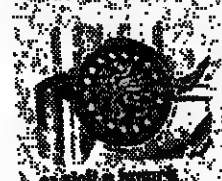
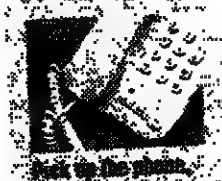
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مركزاً من لاصح

Feeling good – the natural way

In part two of our series, Shyam Singh looks at ways to spring-clean your system and how eating the right foods can boost energy levels

TO MONOFAST, you should only eat one kind of fruit or vegetable. This both cleanses the body and allows the stomach to rest (because no proteins and fats are eaten, there is no requirement for hydrochloric acid and bile, which digest and emulsify these foods in the stomach).

The body uses all that we eat in the form of glucose. Fructose is changed to glucose by the stomach's digestive pro-

MONOFAST

cess. The best fruits are with plums, grapes, kiwi fruit, papaya, custard apples or watermelons.

The best juices are from root vegetables like carrots, beetroot and celery tops.

Continue this diet for seven to twenty-one days and drink plenty of hot water.

For the colon eat soft pears,

plums, papaya (with seeds), onion soup, apples with seeds.

For the kidneys and heart eat watermelons or grapes.

For the liver eat grilled oranges or ripe pineapple.

For the stomach eat apples without seeds.

For all organs eat peaches, apricots (including the kernel) and nectarines (but only ripe ones).

To strengthen the body eat mangoes, papaya and grapes.

SPORTS DIET

ON WAKING, place the juice of a whole lemon and the juice of a whole orange in a tumbler of hot water, allow to cool and drink first thing with one tablespoon of fructose. If fruit is not obtainable, use plain water.

Breakfast: Choice of half a grapefruit, orange, apple or stewed prunes. One or two soft boiled, poached or scrambled eggs. A piece of cod, wholemeal bread with butter. A cup of tea or dandelion coffee.

Or, fruit salad, with seedless raisins, nuts, plus 25g of sesame seeds. One or two glasses of fruit juice.

Lunch: One or two slices of wholemeal bread with fresh butter, tomato and green salad. Fruit or fruit salad. Glass of fruit juice.

Test: One cup of tea with a buttered rusk or cracker.

Dinner: Pulped cream soup; choice of lean meat, fish or omelette with potatoes and green salad or mixed vegetable salad. Choice of fruit salad, stewed fruit, or a pudding made with tapioca, semolina or macaroni.

Avoid all starchy foods, white bread, white sugar, white flour, pickles, vinegar, pastries, sausages, out-of-season foods, preserved foods, fried foods, and follow the above-mentioned diet as closely as is convenient. Eat plenty of pomegranates, figs, oranges, ground almonds, cabbage, spinach, carrots, tomatoes, grapes and sesame seeds.

Assignment: Learn how to breathe out properly. Emphasis needs to be placed on emptying the lungs, not breathing in.

WHEN

suffering from acute arthritis or gout, try a pineapple mono-fast for seven days. Ensure that the pineapples are very ripe and that the acidic core is removed.

Eat raw food for at least one month and continue to eat pineapple for breakfast. Avoid any sugar or wheat products; drink plentiful amounts of bottled water, and avoid all fizzy drinks as they contain saccharine.

Arthritis remedy: Squeeze the juice from three pineapples, three lemons, three oranges, three grapefruit. Put the juice in a jar and seal with a lid.

Put the pineapple skins with the seeds of the orange, lemons and grapefruit into a blender until pulped. Place in a glass basin and add 450ml cold water. Leave the mixture overnight.

The next day mix with the juice and strain. Then take 250ml boiling water, 50g cream of tartar (citric acid), 50g Epsom salts (ed-

ARTHRITIS

ible), 25g bicarbonate of soda. Dissolve this mixture in the water until cooled, using an earthenware or china receptacle. As cream of tartar will not mix readily, the mixture needs to be well stirred when boiling and well shaken before taking.

Mix the juice and bottle. Drink a glass (150ml) from time to time on an empty stomach each day for 27 weeks. By that time your body will have thrown off all the stiffness in the joints.

Ensure a plentiful supply of ripe pineapples before beginning the diet, remembering to cut out the acidic parts. Also take homeopathic tissue salts as advised by a homeopath.

As a general rule it is safer to avoid eating oranges and lemons on their own if you suffer from arthritis since they tend to affect the calcium balance of the body.

DETOXIFICATION

DETOXIFICATION takes place in the liver. One of the best ways to stimulate a liver detox is a diet of grilled oranges. Grilled oranges are anti-fungal, anti-bacterial and anti-viral. They contain large amounts of vitamins C and P. When both vitamins are combined they form a new vitamin called bioflavonoid complex, which has a positive powerful impact on the immune system. When you fill or bake the

orange, the white of the skin becomes very mushy and mingles with the flesh. This pulp is the most potent part of the baked orange. Cut the oranges into two halves and grill them with the insides facing the heat. The exposed part facing the grill should look brown as if cinnamon had been sprinkled on it. This colouration will enable you to see that you have grilled the oranges properly.



Eating only one kind of fruit or vegetable cleanses the body's organs and allows the stomach a well-earned rest

SPRING-CLEAN

AS THE name suggests, this is a springtime diet. In the same way that we spring-clean our homes after the winter, you can detoxify and cleanse your body from the effects of winter foods, which are often preserved and rich in starch and proteins. To initiate this change of diet, eat only raw food for a day before starting it.

First day: Fruit juice diluted with distilled or decalcified water, alternating with clear vegetable soup from seasonal vegetables. Use six cups of diced or grated vegetables for the vegetable soup. Boil four litres of water until two litres are left. Drink one cupful every two hours during the day.

Second day: Repeat. Third day: Three meals of fresh fruit only. Any fruit that you can buy — pineapples, peaches, apples, oranges, pears, etc.

Fourth day: Repeat, plus a glass of instant biological vegetable bouillon at each meal.

Fifth day: Breakfast: Fresh fruit and biyoghurt.

Lunch: Large salad comprising lettuce, watercress, grated carrots. Follow it up with raisins and soaked prunes or figs.

Dinner: Steamed cabbage and carrots with 50g of marinated tofu — cooked or raw.

Sixth day: Breakfast: Fresh fruit and wheatgerm biyoghurt.

Lunch: Large mixed salad with three crispbreads and butter.

Dinner: Steamed sprouts or greens. Organically grown potatoes baked with their skins. Baked apples stuffed with raisins and cloves.

Seventh day: Design your meal with wholemeal bread, honey, wholemeal cereals, fresh fruit, mixed green salads, diluted fruit juices.

Assignments: Take a hot bath every night with 500g Epsom salts 500g sea salt and 125g bicarbonate of soda. You may also add a teaspoon each of mustard powder and paprika. Be careful not to touch or rub your eyes. Stand up slowly to avoid dizziness, then take a cold shower. Go straight to bed with warm night clothes.

If a bath is not available, take hot and cold showers. Let the water run on the spine three minutes hot and one minute cold. Repeat three times.

© Extracted from The Secrets of Natural Health by Shyam Singh, Element Books, £9.99. To order, telephone 01747-851 339.

AN EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER THE TIMES

Exclusive screenings of The Crucible

Readers of *The Times* have the chance to enjoy an exclusive preview screening of *The Crucible*, with Academy Award winner Daniel Day-Lewis, Winona Ryder and Joan Allen.

Author Arthur Miller wrote the screenplay for *The Crucible*, adapting his stage play about a group of teenage girls accused of witchcraft in Salem in 1692. The film, directed by Nicholas Hytner (director of *The Madness of King George*) is a drama about collective evil and personal guilt.



HOW TO GET YOUR COMPLIMENTARY CINEMA TICKETS

Collect four differently numbered tokens from *The Times* and attach them to the voucher which will be published on Thursday. Present the completed voucher and tokens at one of the cinemas listed at the specified time of the screening (not before — except for UCI cinemas, see left). The voucher entitles you to two seats only for a screening of *The Crucible* on Monday, February 24, 1997. Seats will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to availability.

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SHOWCASE (6.30-7pm): Birmingham: Erdington; Bristol: Avon Meads; Coventry: Cross Point; Glasgow: Showcase Leisure Park, Bargeddie; Leeds: Batley; Liverpool: Morris Green; Manchester: Belle Vue; Nottingham: Lenton; Peterborough: Boagate; Reading: Winnersh; Stockton: Teesside Leisure Park; Walsall: Bentley Mill Way.

WARNER (6-6.30pm): Acton: Royal Leisure Cinema; Cambridge: Grafton Centre; Croydon: Lathams Way; Fitchley: Great North Leisure Park; Harrow: St Georges Shopping & Leisure Centre.

ODEON (6-6.30pm): London: 40 Leicester Square.

UCI (6.30-7pm): Please collect your two free tickets for UCI cinemas after 1pm on Friday, February 21: Milton Keynes: UCI 10, The Point, 602 Midsummer Boulevard; Sheffield: UCI 10, Crystal Peaks Shopping Centre; Dudley: UCI 10, Menyhill Centre; Darby: UCI 10, Metcar Centre; West Thurrock: UCI 10, Lakeside Retail Park; Swansea: UCI 10, Quay Parade, Park Tower; Poole: UCI 10, Tower Park; Preston: UCI 10, Riversway, Ashton on Ribbles; Bracknell: UCI 10, The Point, Skimped Hill Lane; Lee Valley: UCI 12, Picketts Lock, Edmonton.

THE lungs consist of a number of bronchi. The bronchi divide into bronchioles, which further divide into smaller sets of alveoli, which absorb the oxygen. A useful exercise to open the lungs is to tap the chest and emit a "Yaai! Yaai! Yaai!" sound for three to five minutes each day.

All plants of the allium family are anti-cataract: chives, onions, garlic and leeks. Red onions are more effective than white onions because they are rich in vitamins A and E. They are also anti-oxidants.

Eating plan:

1. Follow this plan as closely as possible. Drink copious amounts of liquid between meals: water, ginger tea, black tea and herb tea.

ANTI-CATARACT

2. Eat plenty of fresh figs, oranges, grapes, brown bread, ground almonds, cabbage, spinach, carrots, tomatoes, broccoli and pomegranates.

3. Avoid alcohol, starchy foods, white sugar, sausages, pickles, vinegar, tinned, preserved and fried foods.

On rising: Drink a tumbler of warm water with the juice of a lemon or orange, with a tablespoon of fructose.

Breakfast: Fruit salad with raisins and nuts. One or two glasses diluted fruit juice.

Lunch: Onion soup. Add some paprika, a pinch of salt and some coarse black pepper. Eat it as hot as you can stand it. Tomato and green salad, fruit. One or two slices of wholemeal bread with unsalted butter. Fruit juice, vegetable bouillon, or Marmite dissolved in hot water.

Dinner: Broccoli, steamed with lemon, tamarind and coarse black pepper. Potatoes. Green salad or raw mixed vegetable salad. As much onion soup as you like. Lean meat, fish or omelette. Tapioca or buckwheat pudding.

Assignments: Go for long walks in the countryside; when your nose is blocked, add a few drops of eucalyptus oil, camphor oil and tea-tree oil to hot water and then inhale; massage the feet to stimulate the lungs.

THIS diet will not cure any of the following disorders, but it will help to minimise the effect of the symptoms:

- All forms of neuralgia
- Sleep disorders
- Vertigo
- Headaches
- Impaired consciousness
- Tremors
- Paralysis
- Nerve root disorders

Breakfast: Two tablespoons sesame seeds soaked in water overnight, or 20 pecan nuts soaked overnight, or 20 almonds soaked overnight and peeled, and raw or dried fruit.

NERVES

soaked overnight. Midday: 25-50g cream cheese, raw salad (including any raw vegetables shredded, grated or minced) with walnut oil and lemon juice dressing. Salads make the gastric juices work. Follow it with 75-100g dried fruit, preferably apples, dates and pineapples.

Evening: Wholemeal bread and butter or cereal with cream. Salad again with nuts, cream or honey. Eat a cup of boiled millet.

Night: One cup of instant vegetable bouillon.

Drinks: Barley water, dandelion coffee, bran tea (one tablespoon of bran per mug). Boil and let simmer for three to five minutes; fresh vegetable juices, diluted milk, coffee (freshly ground, one to two cups a day) with cold-pressed honey.

Drink about half to three-quarters of a litre of liquids a day between meals.

Assignment: Hot and cold showers on the spine, three minutes hot and one minute cold. Finish with a cold one.

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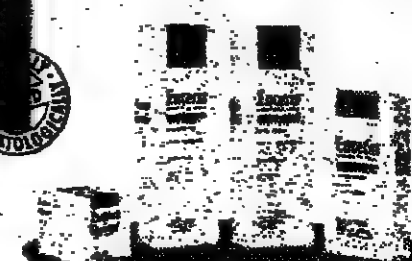
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How I was cured of nightmares



Nightmares happen to people who think they are good and fail to acknowledge that they are also evil, says Fay Weldon

I suffered from nightmares when I was a child and believed in ghosts until I was well into my twenties. I had some justifications: I would "see" apparitions from time to time — people who were there, then suddenly not there, or be followed by shadows with nothing observable to cause them. I would "hear" noises in the night, where no noise ought to be, and so forth. When I was 18, I dreamt my grandmother came to see me in the middle of the night. She told me "I'm dying, I'm dying", and then said goodbye to me and smiled. As it happened she'd had a heart attack at the time I had the dream and had only thought she was dying, and lived to discuss the dream with me. Telepathy more than a haunting, certainly, and that was a "good" dream — at least she was smiling — and useful, because I called home the next day; but other dreams could bring terror with them and the apparitions discouraged one from going where one was obliged to go. Premonitions of disaster sometimes came with these dubious perceptions, as a total eclipse of the sun seems to do in India, and as irrationally. But disaster never happened. As for the nightmares, I started with the notion that they came from somehow outside me: that they were invasions of pure evil which happened when one was asleep and defenceless and unable to fight back the dreamer pure victim. Poor me, poor, frightened me. Nightmares happen, I think, to people who believe they are good, and fail to acknowledge their own darkness. Children are always the heroes of their own lives: as one grows older one comes to realise one is villain, too.

In my late twenties, I was cured of nightmares. This is how it happened. I'd had a recurring "bad dream" for years, in which I was making my way up a mountain in a place which looked like Transylvania — certainly vampire country. Night was falling. We — a vague group — stopped at a country inn. I would be given a room off an upper corridor, and go to bed and try to sleep. But moonlit forest branches scabbled against the window, and eventually claws, too, and the window would crack, and howling, demonic creatures spring at me — and I'd awake, and the terror last for hours.

Then one night reality caught up with the dream. I went on a touring holiday in Austria with my then husband, 25 years older than myself, my small child and a "girl to help". We had a sedate blue Ford Anglia car, but super-charged so my

husband could overtake dramatically where no safe overtaking seemed possible, missing death by inches, leaving pale and terrified faces behind him. For some reason I took this pastime for granted — perhaps because I was so grateful for a roof over my head I didn't like to argue.

Night was falling as we took the mountain road out of Innsbruck. To my terror, I recognised the road as the one in my dream. With every curve the place became more familiar. Trees bending in over the road, bare slabs of rock gleaming in the moonlight. We stopped at the first auberge we came to — thank God it wasn't at all like the one in the dream. I remember my relief. But then it turned out the inn was full. Staff led us to an annexe — and there the nightmare house stood, steep-roofed, dark, up the familiar stairs with the carved oak banisters, along the upstairs corridor, the white-aproned maid showed us our two rooms, facing each other. In the room to the right, moonlit branches scabbled against the pane — the one to the left looked out over the valley, calm, benign and still. I put the girl and my child in the haunted room, and chose the other for myself and my husband. I am not proud of it. Mothers should not behave like this. They should give up their lives and sanity for their children. I knew the better way, but chose the worse. I was not a good person.

I passed a quiet night. I even slept, for once dreamlessly. I had survived the night but my relief was short-lived — I spent the next few days in terror, waiting for nemesis for the car crash, for the fatal accident to me and mine. It did not come.

I never had the dream again. I don't think I've had a nightmare since. There was no way I could pretend any longer that I was so nice and good that evil must come from outside me, not inside me. I realised I was responsible for my own nightmares. They were self-generated. The fact of the matter was that I was as cowardly and self-interested as anyone else. Nor could I hide from myself that my husband's overbearing habits scared me to bits and would kill us all sooner or later, child included. I ran away soon after and restarted my life.

If dreams are how we tell ourselves what we need to know, mine were just having to shake me very hard indeed. I was being so obnoxious. Nightmares are desperate things.

Extracted from *The Tiger Garden*, Sepp's fall, £9.99



He-women extraordinaire: Margaret Thatcher (although she was rather a relic of her upbringing) and Sigourney Weaver playing the vamp with Harrison Ford in *Working Girl*



Girl power: the she-women you can rely on — the Spice Girls, Bianca and Tiffany from *EastEnders* and the warm-hearted women from the American sitcom *Friends*



He-women and she-women

They have all the benefits of feminism, but none of the battle scars. Giles Coren reports on the advocates of women's glib

For the past couple of weeks, the women gathered around the office chocolate machine in the middle of the afternoon have been consumed, it seems, by a single obsession. In the local news-agent, and in the Waitrose carpark, in the corridors of the House, and on the terraces at Chelsea, women have been congregating to assert the possession of an eighth sense (or is it a ninth).

"You can sniff them out a mile away," they say.

Who?

"Oh, you wouldn't understand."

Try me.

"The he-women. Surely you've heard of them?"

Tessa Sanderson? Brigitte Nielsen? Jet from *Gladiators*? Or are he-women, perhaps, what it-girls grow into, once they have eschewed she-hood? Apparently not. The concept stems from a recent piece in the *Sunday Mirror* by Amanda Platell, at the time acting editor of the paper. For a sensory perception to have developed in half our species, these he-women must have been around for longer than a fortnight, but it is Ms Platell who has given the condition a name.

The article in question offered an indictment of Nicola Horlick by an outraged "sister". On the first day of February, Ms Horlick, whose perpetuity until then had made her something of an icon among businesswomen, said: "Most women aren't cut out for jobs at the top. They do not work hard enough. They are pathetic and they cry. All they do is moan and whinge."

And Ms Horlick is cited as a he-woman. He-women, Ms Platell says "feel threatened by women. It dilutes their own uniqueness, and they do everything they can to hold other women down. They are worse than the worst male chauvinists." Really? Worse than Bernard Manning, Jim Davidson and the Duke of Edinburgh?

If by "he-woman" what is meant is the sort of woman who surrounds herself with men, does nothing to promote the interests of her own sex, and does all she can to kill off the competition, then the model for the modern he-woman must be Sigourney Weaver's fire-breathing businesswoman in *Working Girl*. In Mike Nichols' 1988 film, Melanie Griffith takes a job as a secretary with a female boss, hopes of promotion, and hopes for better treatment than she has suffered at the hands of men, only to find that the new alternative is far worse. Weaver belittles her in public, squashes her efforts at self-

improvement, and ultimately steals her ideas for her own profit.

"I saw it again on video and it rang so true," says Diane Turner (not her real name), a bond trader for a large European bank. "I am perceived in the office as being just like the Sigourney Weaver character, and now they have started calling me 'Horlick'. But I don't feel like that at all, I feel like the downtrodden but essentially sweet and loving Melanie Griffith type."

So why the confusion? "I think it is because successful women used to be like that, and people's imaginations have not yet had time to readjust," Ms Turner says. "In the past, I have certainly worked for one he-woman, a woman who mocked me in front of men, and sat there cackling abuse at me while male contemporaries leapt to fight her cigarettes and receive the flutters of her eyelashes, as well as responsibilities she never gave me."

"She would always say things like, 'Just because I am a woman and a director, don't expect that you are capable of it. I am not prepared to invest time and the benefit of my experience in you, when you are just going to leave and have children before you're 30.' If a man had talked to me like that, I could have made a reasonable case for discrimination, not that I would have done."

Maybe the zombie women like her have made it possible for a newer breed of woman, like me, to be a bit more human — but they have also left us the legacy of their brutish ambition and hormone imbalances.

And she cites the kind of women who chat up other people's husbands at parties, surround themselves with men at social events from Asot to the Oscars, and spread bile and venom among the women of their acquaintance to the ultimate end of discrediting their sex.

Whatever happened to Girl Power? What about the Spice Girls and "friendship never ends"? From the odd episode of *Friends* I have seen, I thought that Rachel, Phoebe and Monica were archetypes for the modern female, who

spend all her time valuing her buddies over long-term boyfriends and plotting the impending dawn of the gynocracy over lashings of coffee latte. These are clearly the she-women the ones who are always in the loo consoling the girlfriends of the men being gobbled up outside by the he-girls, women like Caroline Quentin, Josie Lawrence, Sally Gunnell, Clare Short, and Bianca and Tiffany from *EastEnders*.

If Nicola Horlick has brought the he-woman issue under fresh scrutiny, it is said that she, in turn, learnt all she knows from Carol Galley, her former employer, the vice-chairman of Mercury Asset Management. And digging deeper among City women, one finds that they are only too happy to suggest candidates for the ultimate "he-woman", but do not want to be quizzed, for fear of giving off the whiff of sour grapes.

But the name of Ruth Lea crops up more than a few times, and deserves a mention. Head of the policy unit at the Institute of Directors, she caused quite a tremor among the sort of women who are the winning Women in Business conference last March, when she said: "I actually believe that obstacles to women's progress are exaggerated... I can't help thinking that people who attribute their problems to obstacles are coping out. Perhaps they don't deserve to succeed." And on women-only networks, an issue that really separates the he-men from the she-men, she said: "To be blunt, they're not important enough. The majority of important people are men."

If Lea's or Horlick's opinions were expressed by a man they would be denounced instantly as appallingly sexist. "They are appallingly sexist," says Tanya Mitchell, a project co-ordinator at Opportunity 2000, which has 300 member companies, and seeks to "increase the quality and quantity of women in the workplace".

But the he-woman attitude is not totally new to Ms Mitchell. "I have to say that I have encountered no women like this myself, but I have certainly heard stories of women getting to the top and then pulling the rope up after them. It may be that they feel they have reached the top by

their own achievements and don't want other women jumping on the bandwagon." Perhaps he-women resent organisations such as Opportunity 2000 as if, in some way, a significant influx of women would undermine their own achievements.

"I interviewed one woman," says Ms Mitchell, "who felt that she had kicked down this massive door, and helped other women to get through it, who might not otherwise have had the strength. But she was delighted about it, not resentful. That is the common response, and surely the most natural."

Perhaps prejudice of this kind, that women do not work hard enough and whinge, is something that bubbles under the surface, but which men now know is not acceptable to "say aloud, whereas a woman feels that she is more entitled to do so. A man who said such things would be jumped on from a great height, and the same should happen to a woman."

A much wider audience will have been inspired by that patron of all he-women, Margaret Thatcher, who, once assured of a power beyond the realm of gender specificity, declined the opportunity to offer women jobs in her cabinet — attracting the wrath, most notably of Baroness Chalker.

Afraid of dilution? Enamoured of a specific kind of power she could wield only over men? Or genuinely unimpressed with the political gifts of her own sex? Whichever view you take, it was certainly influential — who did not appreciate the ironic replication of her cabinet in the *That's Life* team, in which Esther Rantzen ruled and starred but surrounded herself with men — Gavin, Chris, Bill, Doc — who were occasionally encouraged to hold up a vegetable and remark how much like a rude part of their anatomy it looked.

But the Thatcher attitude has since been dismissed — understood, even — as a relic of her upbringing in a bygone age, when men were men, and so were women, if they knew what was good for them.

And so Ms Platell's language seems strangely out of tune with the times. "Superwoman had become superwoman," she writes, in the idiom of a 1970s bra-burner. Does Platell really believe in the he-woman?

ist Kathy Lette, for one, is taking no chances. "The he-women betray their sex," says the author of *Mad Cows and Fetal Attraction*. "They have all the benefits of feminism, but none of the battle scars — they are advocates of women's glib."

And while it is impossible not to sympathise with Ms Platell's thesis (generated, it is said, by her own suffering at the hands of unseemly women in the workplace), there is no evidence of a chronic breakdown in sisterly solidarity on her own part, that she elected to create this inter-cine strife in the first place?

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Africa is still a problem for all of us

Tom Stacey says Africa's problems need to be unscrambled, most of all in the former French colonies

A scramble is under way in Africa's heartland that recalls the scramble of a century ago, and whites are still at the heart of it. Then, the scramble was the British, Germans, French and Belgians, each thrusting aside the Arabs. The scramble today is American (thrusting aside the Arabs) and French, with the British also on the scene.

The rewards then were slaves and ivory for the Arabs, and for the Europeans, saved souls and colonial territories — and all that might flow from them. The rewards today are spheres of influence, and all that flows from them in terms of power and wealth. And for certain Arabs, there is the prospect of the spread of fundamentalist Islam.

A century ago, the contest was bold and overt, now it is covert. Now, as then, avarice and altruism run side by side. The colonial will evaporated scarcely three generations after the carve-up, and the metropolitan powers tested independence to this or that territory, with a ballot box masquerading as democracy.

The Congo fell apart instantly. Zaire and Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya deteriorated in varying styles at various speeds. Civil war erupted in south Sudan. The Central African Republic splintered into barbarism.

In Rwanda and Burundi the vote overturned the social order of generations by passing power from the Tutsi aristocracy to the Hutu majority. Mutual massacre ensued and Tutsis in their tens of thousands fled to Uganda.

As the Cold War faded, aid became the thing, whether supplied through the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the UN, or directly from the donor countries to their African protégés. But aid became ever more sharply conditional. America's economic and political weight predominated. Yet the United States had come lately to the region, its experience negligible, its knowledge sparse and skewed. On the ground, black and post-colonial Realpolitik was separately at work.

The French in Africa today are pushy, patriotic and paternalistic. When the Belgians threw in the sponge in Rwanda-Urundi, as they did in the Congo, France saw its chance to extend its patronage over three "new" countries where French was the common tongue. In the late 1980s, defence agreements with both of the Hutu governments brought French military participation in Rwanda's attempt to contain the guerrilla war conducted by well-armed and trained Tutsis fighting as the Rwanda Patriotic Front.

So who was arming and training the Patriotic Front? Indeed, who composed it? Well, since 1986 Uganda's guerrilla president has been a Tutsi, Yoweri Kagame, who adopted the sobriquet "Museveni" (Mr. Seven) after the little band around which he formed the largely Tutsi guerrilla force that finally won him power in Kampala. One of the early band was Paul Kagame, the vice-president and effective leader of today's Rwanda. The cream of Museveni's army was not easily distinguishable from the Patriotic Front.

Museveni could not be worse than his predecessors, and might prove better. Three years later, in 1989, Lyndia Chalker became

dispenser of Britain's overseas aid, and Museveni her golden protégé. He has made her look successful. Barons Chalker, not one to underestimate her queenly role, has championed him indefatigably in the American-dominated forums of international aid, as she has simultaneously championed the waiving of debts. Uganda today, with half its budget provided by aid, owes on a majestic scale. Kampala is stuffed with aid organisations manned by high-earning foreigners.

Since the late 1980s, America has been sucked into the region by the Somali crisis, Islamic fundamentalism in Khartoum, and the humanitarian disaster of Rwanda. What America saw in Sudan was the Government of General Bashir spreading Iranian-style Muslim fundamentalism which would destabilise the Middle East and northern Africa. So Bashir must be weakened. One way to achieve that was to pour money and weapons via Uganda into the black, non-Muslim rebels of John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army.

Following the simultaneous murder of the Hutu presidents of both Rwanda and Burundi in 1994, the first to be chopped up in Rwanda were Tutsi by Hutu.

The Tutsi (who make up 11 per cent of Rwanda's population) instantly became the goodies while the Hutus became the baddies. So

American-led aid poured in, much of it via Uganda, and the Hutu governments of both countries collapsed. But the Tutsi are on top now. They have the power, the weapons — they never surrendered them — and the international money.

And today the Tutsis have the eastern part of Zaire, under the commissariat of Museveni's guerrilla place-man, Laurent Kabila, who dreams that from his enclave he will roll up the map of Zaire from the east, as his backer Museveni rolled up Uganda from the south-west.

Already his authority reaches into copper-rich Shaba (Katanga), his home ground, and he threatens Kisangani (Stanleyville) in the north, a stone's throw from Mobutu's own fortified tribal base. Great territories and potential wealth, and the power of gods and cultures are seemingly at stake. In all this, a dependable Museveni is seen as vital by America and Britain.

Yet the French are opposed. Having backed the Hutus, they have for the moment lost out. They also trained and armed the fighting forces of Zaire's Mobutu, who is now back at his remote palace after treatment for cancer in Europe. France is smarting in its temporary eclipse. Yet the French ring the area. They have troops across the river from Kinshasa (in Brazzaville) and from Kisangani, and (in Bangui). They have more in Djibouti in the Horn. The French know Africa, are pragmatic, intensely possessive of their linguistic area, and accustomed to responding to calls in Africa wherever diplomatically and strategically feasible.

As vast Zaire crumbles, Museveni's Tutsi adventurism is catching up with his backers in the heart of a very African darkness. After the Somali fiasco, America's State Department coined a wishful adage, "Let Africa solve Africa's problems". But Africa won't, and can't — not on this scale, and least of all where French is spoken and there is scrambling to be done.

From Tote privatisation to windfall taxes, Mr Brown's plans are falling apart, says Woodrow Wyatt

Why Labour is betting on a loser

The closer we get to the election, the more closely Labour's possible methods of raising extra money to pay for at least some of their election pledges are examined. They are constructed by their promise, if they keep it, to follow the present Government's spending plans for the next two years and not to raise personal income tax. It is desperate work in Gordon Brown's office, scratching around for plums to pick.

Over the weekend, the idea of privatising the Tote was floated — in the belief that it is state-owned. Presumably this emanated from Gordon Brown's circle. I laughed. As Chairman of the Tote I am very conscious of the Government's admission to the all-party committee that examined the Tote in 1991, that the government does not own the Tote. For the time being, only the members of the board are able to dispose of or add to its assets. Labour has always been very supportive of the Tote, and recently helped through both Houses of Parliament legislation enabling the Tote to take bets on Irish lottery numbers and also to offer bets on any event, just as ordinary book-makers do. This includes bets on the results of the May 1 election.

The Tote now has the greatest bookmaker of them all, Ladbrokes, joining Tote Direct. Others are

following, and by the end of this year it is reasonable to hope that some 6,000 of the country's 8,000 betting shops will have signed on. There is a fine prospect of surging profitability for the Tote, the profits of which go to racing. Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, understood this and had a row with Gordon Brown. Yesterday, Robin Cook, who knows about racing, said he had pulled down the curtain on the crazy Tote plan. This is a record for Labour summer-saults in 36 hours. I am glad to note that Labour values the Tote at £400-500 million.

The windfall tax has run into difficulties. Millions with small shareholdings or associated with pension funds, which have invested heavily in the privatised utilities, are growing more than stonewalled. I have a feeling that this curious tax, of which we are not told the extent, could hit the rocks.

Another possibility for raising money which would not breach Labour's promise on personal income tax is a wealth tax. In August 1974, Denis Healey's "squeeze the rich till the pips squeak" fame, issued Command Paper 5704 from the Treasury. In his foreword he observed: "The bulk of privately owned wealth is still concentrated in relatively few hands. Once the additional taxable capacity represented by ownership of wealth is adequately brought into charge, excessive inequalities of wealth will in time be ended..."

Denis Healey gave various examples of his proposed tax, starting at 1 per cent a year on anyone with total assets of £100,000 from all sources, rising to 4 per cent for those with £25 million and 5 per cent for having the check to own assets of more than £5 million. My friend Lord Holford of United News and Media, like other enormously

wealthy Labour supporters who imagine that Labour is only a tax on a pussy cat, had better start some tax avoidance schemes.

With the country in increasingly sceptical mood about Europe, the difference between Labour and the Conservatives is growing sharper. Robin Cook has said he looks forward to a majority of socialist parties controlling the EU. He added that he is comfortable with the "social model". This includes the social chapter that Labour, pledged to join, which has devastated industry and commerce on the Continent. The social chapter is the reason why German unemployment is above 12 per cent and still rising while ours is 6.5 per cent and falling. Numerous German firms are moving into Britain, hoping that we will never join the single currency, under which the richer nations will be forced to pay huge subsidies to the poorer. But Mr

Cook has said that if the single currency works for those who join it, it is inevitable that we should, too.

I do not believe Mr Major would ever allow a Conservative government to join the single currency, with all its calamitous consequences. Under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the EU cannot stop our trade with Europe if we keep the pound intact. The absurdity of cutting Britain off from the continental marketplace would be disastrous for the other EU economies, with which we have an enormous adverse balance.

The Tories' private polls are moving towards a single figure gap between them and Labour, and the present difference between those who identify most with the Tories or most with Labour is now nil. The variation of these figures from those of the large commercial polling organisations is almost certainly due to the atmosphere created by broadcasting and the press, which suggests that it is "politically incorrect" to confess support for Major. In the polling booths it will be a different story. The race is far from finished. I have backed the outsider, John Major, coming up fast, and I do not intend to hedge the bets I have put on him. If I were you, Mrs Blair, I wouldn't start planning new decorations for No 10.

The ideals of a university

Oxford must protect its excellence, but not by narrowing its intake

I suppose the worst thing about being a scholar must be the duty to come to painful conclusions. If fragments of moon-rock turn out on analysis to be green cheese after all, or new and uncontroversial evidence proves that your life's work was a waste of time because we have been reading the Rosetta Stone upside down, then the scholar cannot bury the depressing evidence under mounds of political rhetoric. He has to speak up.

At least, this is the kindest interpretation to put upon the statement by a group of Oxford dons that the university might best preserve its quality by going private. The group, led by Robert Stevens, Master of Pembroke, has written an open letter to the Vice-Chancellor saying that "partial privatisation" by charging course fees is inevitable, and that the university should explore the further step of renouncing government funding.

There will be hissing and hostility, especially from those who despise the grip of Oxbridge on public life. "Typical!" they will say. "They want to be free of the masses and to perpetuate the power of their own sort. They want the kittens of the world's fat-cat A la guillotine!" They have a point. A few years ago — even leavened by a few bursaries — is a pretty horrible idea. There is no evidence that a supply of brilliant, adventurous 18-year-old minds is best achieved by seeing whose parents happen to have £8,000 to spare, on top of maintenance. Nor is the idea of prolonged loans attractive: all very well for the likes of Nicola Horlick who glide from Balliol to the financial stratosphere, but unfair on those who go into research or teaching. All it would produce is candidates who are either already rich, or determined to get rich quick. Not the Oxford undergraduate, as I best remember, a miner's son, the brilliant if eccentric daughter of a widowed Leicester dinner-lady, and numerous offspring of modestly paid GPs, teachers and first-generation professionals. None of them — none of us, because my father too was a civil servant nearing retirement — would have been there without public support.

But before throwing the idea out, consider why the dons are reluctantly suggesting it. They say that it

could be the only way to save the collegiate and tutorial system. At this point I acknowledge another barrage of angry sneers: why should this archaic and elitist institution think anybody needs its dated systems of teaching? Who gives a damn whether loopy dons are able to continue listening to privileged kiddies reading out their essays in pairs and proposing their jejune arguments before tripping back up historic staircases to panelled rooms, and dining by candlelight in Batman gowns? Can't the little beasts just live in concrete shoe-boxes and take notes in lecture rooms like everybody else?

Because the tutorial and collegiate system is precious, that's why. Yes, it is old-fashioned; no, it does not meet modern business criteria of cost-effectiveness; yes, it will always be a minority luxury. But it is still precious, as a golden reliquary is precious, or a definitive performance of the *Moonlight Sonata*. It is run by human beings

and some of them are charlatans or idlers, yes, but when it works the system is without compare.

As an Oxford or Cambridge undergraduate, you are a member not a customer of your college, which makes you a younger sibling of some of the most distinguished exponents of many subjects. You have easy access to these people. You meet tutors not amid a sea of upturned lecture-room faces, but individually. You haltingly try out your ideas on them, and are slapped down or encouraged, treated kindly or roughly as chance and desert may have it. Pupils are swapped: from my all-women college I was sent out to such major figures as C. L. Wren, Hugo Dyson, Lord David Cecil and John Jones. Friends in other subjects had a similar spread of experience. Some of it was alarming, some maturing, all stimulating.

Few dons regarded themselves primarily as teachers, and few bothered with kindly sogginess or political correctness. If they thought you were talking rubbish, they said so, even if you were a blushing 17-year-old. Gradually, you learnt to answer back. Sometimes the tutorial hour petered out in lachrymose sherry-drinking, sometimes it ran well over time as we argued intensely about the meaning of a text. I felt part of a



Intensive academic teaching gives students something to aspire to

community of scholars; for quite long periods, indeed, my own degree prospects seemed irrelevant next to the burning interest of the topic in hand.

I thought all universities were like that until friends at more modern foundations explained otherwise. Gradually I realised how eccentric and precious was the system. I had experienced. No doubt it has its faults, but it is founded on respect for scholarship, for argument, for the meeting and sparking of minds. And — ironically given the latest proposals — it is the richer because some of those minds come from different backgrounds. It does some don't end of good to be argued with from a fiercely chippy working-class perspective. If Oxford does continue itself to the offspring of the rich, it will lose vital hybrid vigour.

This dilemma is only the tip of a pyramid of unacknowledged difficulty. We have nearly trebled higher education: one in three young people now goes through something called a university. I put it thus because one of the more breathtakingly dishonest things this government has done is blithely to rename a slew of polytechnics and colleges "universities" without doing anything to ensure the standard of their courses.

There was never anything wrong with an honest poly, many provided vocational courses of great rigour and value, up to any university's standards. But the renaming, and the conspiracy of embarrassed silence which now inhibits distinctions between old stone, red brick, white tile, breezeblock and chipboard "universities", has led to a most unbecoming fudge. The Times will probably be vilified for asking yesterday: "Can the dons taking a

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tutorial in Aristotelian philosophy at Oxford be directly compared to the lecturer teaching 'gold course management' at the University of the West of England?" Angry voices will say that the gold course manager is more economically useful than the philosopher, as if that had anything to do with it. The Education Secretary Mrs Shepherd is particularly fond of making blockish comparisons between landscape gardening and classics degrees to the detriment of the latter. We are constantly told that the gold reikiary is pointless because a Tupperware box does the job just as well.

Nobody dare challenge this. Political parties are too afraid of the growing middle-class, which wants a "university education" for its kids, and wants it free. So we end up with a ghastly middle. Only yesterday, London Guildhall University admitted to using a question from a nine-year-old A level paper in its degree exam, and the lecturer who set the module — at South Thames College, which teaches it on a franchise basis — retorted that it was all the students could manage. The Higher Education Quality Council expresses fears that standards are breaking down; Vice-chancellors admit that grades from different universities vary widely. Not being a vice-chancellor, I can be franker and say that some current "degrees" are worthless: soft, waffly subjects, so many modules that you can't fail, "negotiated" assignments you don't have to do, exams that examine nothing much and no contact with any real scholars.

Meanwhile, by stealth, an informal "Ivy League" is forming: the best universities know who they are, and so do employers. And at the tip of the pyramid, Oxford dons wonder about opting out entirely. So innocent 18-year-olds are being conned by a weaselly, embarrassingly British blend of false egalitarianism and secret snobbery. Earlier generations might have had to fight harder for places, but at least they knew what they were signing up for. They did either academic courses, fascinating in themselves, but hard and possibly of no relevance to any career; or vocational courses which gave them a qualification with definite value; or something shorter and less academic at a College of Further Education. The polys and colleges were honourable and useful places; it is their dignity, not that of the old universities, which is degraded by the present charade.

But what politician would dare enrage voters with the idea that perhaps young Johnny should not be a "university graduate" after all?

In training

THE FORMER nude model Carole Caplin, 35, who embarrassed Labour by showing up with the leader's wife to the 1994 party conference, has skipped back into Cherie Booth's life once again. She is the personal trainer behind her new fitness regime at a north London gym.



Carole, from the waist up

Caplin, who graced the inside pages of the *Daily Star* and once posed semi-nude on the cover of *Men Only*, helped to transform Booth's image after Tony Blair was elected leader in July 1994. But her advice was deemed unnecessary after the media unearthed her modelling past.

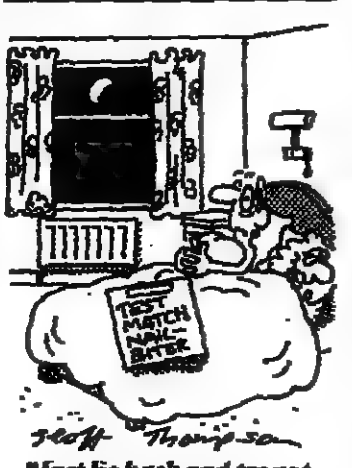
Yet fellow gymrats at the £588-a-year Albany Fitness Centre in Regent's Park claim that she is now helping out again. "Carole has several clients at the gym including Cherie — who doesn't use anyone else," said one.

"Cherie changes in a private room, then Carole goes through a workout with her. After Cherie has had her shower, Carole then helps with her hair and make-up. The two appear to be great friends," she added. "But they like to come very early, at 7am, to keep things discreet."

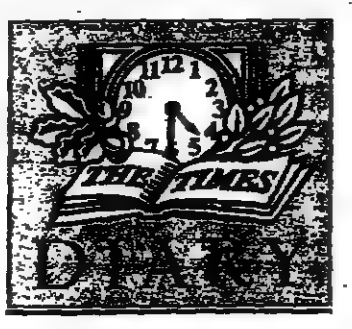
Caplin, a former dancer and author who advocates goat's milk and sex for a healthy life, describes herself as a "lifestyle consultant" whose approach is holistic. She

wasn't free to comment yesterday, said the club. "This is a private matter for Cherie Booth."

● Reports that the newly ennobled Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber is selling his £15 million house and his wine cellar because he plans to move to Ireland in the event of a Labour government may be premature. Sir Andrew, who will be gazetted this week as Lord Lloyd-Webber of Symington (his two barrels have to be



Just lie back and try not to think of England



Hyphenated in the Upper House, is flat-hunting in London — with £10-£15 million in his pocket

Carved up

BAD TIDINGS for the four sculptors left competing to design a statue of Duke Ellington for Soho Square. Sir Eduardo Paolozzi has come off the judging panel for the contest and decided to submit his own design. It is rather as though Rostropovich had decided throw his bow into a school cello contest. Peter Bonas, chairman of Pizza Express, jazz nut, and organiser of the competition explains: "After receiving the first drawings, Eduardo said he would like to throw his hat

into the ring. I wouldn't want this to put the others off though."

Sleaze quietly

SO assiduous has the disgraced MP Neil Hamilton been in his attempts to prevent sales of *Sleaze*, a book summarising the alleged dealings between Tory MPs and Mohamed Al Fayed, that he has been bounding outlets even before they have opened.

Politico's, a new coffee bar planning to sell political literature when it opens this week, has received a stiff solicitor's letter warning of dire consequences if it stocks the book. "It was delivered by motorcycle courier, which seems a bit over the top," says managing director, Iain Dale. "I do not take kindly to threats of this nature. Had he approached us in a different way, we may have listened."

● A Canadian family whose dog ate £51,210 (£500) in notes from a box hidden under the bed followed the golden retriever around with a golden retriever for three days. After a diligent effort — with mother washing and ironing pieces of £20, £50 and £100

bits, and the children taping them together — they were able to deposit \$1,100 in the Hong Kong Bank of Canada.

No six, please

THOSE LUCKY enough to live in the shadow of Lord's Cricket Ground would be advised to wear tin hats when they venture into their gardens this summer. Only the lower tier of the ground's new £13 million Grand Stand will be completed in time for the new season, leaving residents of Cavendish Close, NW6, vulnerable to a bombardment of well-struck sizes.

If legal advice from Jeremy Carver of the international City law firm Clifford Chance is correct the residents are not without means of revenge. "The owners are legally obliged to return the ball," he says, "but only in their own time."

Failing desire

THE DAILY grind of performing in the West End has proved too much for Jessica Lange, the Oscar-winning actress and Urchinpin of Sir Peter Hall's production of *A Street*



Jessica Lange

car Named Desire. Lange took time off after a nasty bout of flu three weeks ago, and has now pulled out of matinee performances on Thursdays. The producers maintain that she is suffering from the after-effects of the virus, but the feeble sprinkling of children and pensioners who show up on damp Thursday afternoons is sufficiently depressing to send any star back to bed.

P.H.S



INNOCENTS ABROAD

Adoption is no place for political correctness

Red tape makes poor swaddling. The Health Secretary's announcement that adoption rules will be relaxed to make it easier for children without families to find families without children is a welcome, but belated, piece of deregulation. As far back as 1993 the then Secretary of State for Health, Virginia Bottomley, argued in a White Paper that children offered for adoption had become hostages of political correctness. Her successor, Stephen Dorrell, deserves two cheers for giving substance to her hopes.

The Government was, apparently, reluctant to act earlier for fear any reform would be overshadowed by arguments over the wisdom of allowing homosexuals to adopt. It is a pity that fear of appearing politically correct in one cause delayed the Government from pruning the PC excesses which already disfigured the adoption process.

The number of British-born children available for adoption has fallen steadily since the Sixties with the wider availability of birth control. Only around 400 were offered last year and there were 20 homes for every child. Given the continual high level of demand and the slow decrease in supply it has become easier for adoption panels to exercise greater selectivity in placing children. The iron law of the market influences even affairs of the heart, but the existence of an unreformed monopoly has meant many deserving parents have been denied.

Decisions in all too many adoption cases have been placed in the hands of social workers who have given more weight to abstract considerations than native wit and commonsense. Social workers are easy Aunt Sallies for Conservative politicians, but in their application of racial criteria for placing children with parents some professionals have turned political correctness into a prejudice every bit as restrictive as those it

was supposed to counteract. While it might be preferable, other things being equal, for a child of one race to be placed with parents from the same background it is rarely the case that other things are equal.

To elevate race above other criteria as the benchmark of suitability is to stray down the cul-de-sac which leads to the ghetto. Complementing the professional experience of social workers on adoption panels with lay members who have experience of adoption, as parent or child, should make for a more balanced approach.

It is not only those children who languish in institutions, however well-run, in this country who would benefit from the chance to be placed with parents. Hundreds of families, anxious to adopt children from abroad, have been thwarted by regulations. Hopeful parents have been set impossible hurdles, including having to learn Mandarin, by functionaries who should learn what it is to be British — tolerant and welcoming to luckless innocents rescued from misfortune.

Children, of course, are not commodities. Advances in fertility treatment and "right to choose" rhetoric have encouraged an approach to children which treats them more as lifestyle accessory and less as divine gift. Parents who are not naturally blessed with children deserve every sympathy but may not always provide suitable homes for adopted children. Nevertheless, there should be a far greater preparedness to place children with couples yearning to adopt. So many children grow up in circumstances where affection is rationed that it is worth neglecting incompatibilities in background to see willing families given the chance to prove themselves. Loving arms are a better guarantee of future happiness for children than matching faces.

HOMES FOR THE BRAVE

Gurkhas deserve the warmest welcome that Britain can offer

The Government announcement yesterday that the Gurkhas serving in Britain will, for the first time, be allowed to bring their families with them is a late but welcome change of heart. It said that 450 married couples will be provided for the soldiers withdrawn from Hong Kong and rebased in Britain, allowing about 900 wives and children to come here. The announcement is a clear retreat from the tough line taken by the Ministry of Defence last year, which insisted that there was no available accommodation for the one of the most famous and decorated brigades in the British Army. As any military commander knows, tactical retreat is always the best option when the forces ranged on the other side are overwhelming. The pity is only that the Government did not occupy the high ground from the start.

The announcement was part of a general review of the Gurkhas' pay and conditions. The Army and the world were very different when the 1947 Tripartite Agreement, governing the recruitment of Gurkhas, was signed with India. The Gurkhas, whose valour in war has earned them 26 VC's since 1815, were an essential element in the policing of the Empire: a force well able to adapt to tropical heat, terrorist insurgency or Asian conditions. There was little need for them to serve in Britain. Nor was much thought given to their comfort or family life (or indeed to that of any servicemen). Their pay and pensions were pegged to levels in the Indian Army so as not to undermine Indian recruitment. And their reintegration in Nepal on retirement was no concern of the Army.

The Empire has gone, recruitment has fallen and the flag has been hauled down over the Gurkha overseas base in Hong Kong. It is not from mere sentiment, however, that Britain still wants a place in

the Army for these remarkable soldiers. Their morale, motivation and unflinching bravery are as much in need as once was their reputation for ferocity and deadly handling of their kukris. The Army is again having difficulty with recruitment; and with continuing cases of racial bullying, the Gurkhas' prestige and ability to sort out anyone minded to taunt them on grounds of race will do more than any instruction in racial sensitivity.

Gurkhas' motivation, however, has been threatened by increasing anomalies over pay. To conform with the 1947 agreement, basic rates remain low, supplemented by special allowances depending on conditions and location. Over the years these have produced puzzling disparities. The Government has now announced a standard rate, intended to align the income of Gurkhas with the take-home pay of British ranks. There is to be a general rise which will make almost all Gurkhas better off, except those based in Brunel. Such a reform is all the more urgent now that most Gurkhas are serving in Britain, in the same barracks and under the same conditions as Britons.

Providing married quarters — as in Hong Kong — is part of the deal to make conditions for Gurkhas no different from those for any Army recruit. There should never have been any quarrel about this: and ugly suspicions of racial discrimination were allowed to gain currency. What cannot be entertained is equal pension benefits. Gurkhas retiring will live not in Britain but in Nepal, where the cost of living is far lower. After Hong Kong, the Gurkhas may feel cold and uncomfortable in Britain. Yesterday's changes are intended to show that the welcome is as warm here as it was in the last garrison of the Empire.

QUEEN LEAR

The play's the thing wherein to catch a new angle on the king

A woman playing King Lear cracks the last theatrical taboo. This must have happened before, in amateur feminist productions and girls' schools. But Kathryn Hunter, interviewed on our arts page today, will be the first woman to play Lear professionally.

And for this she deserves sympathy as well as cheers. For Lear is the hardest of all the great tragic parts, even for a man. And Ms Hunter is only five feet tall, so she will have to create the majesty of Shakespeare's mad old king with her presence rather than her stature. Her voice is certainly low. But in this part she must forget Lear's recommendation that a woman's voice should be ever soft and gentle as well. For she has to drown the hurricanes and out roar her tigress daughters. But curmudgeon is an epithet applied exclusively to angry old men. The nearest female equivalent, "vrago" and "old cow", sound comic not tragic words.

But at least she will play Lear as a man. So there will be no need to edit the script to make Lear roar, "Come not between the shepherd and her wrath", and "You see me here, you gods, a poor old woman." But the tragedy, which runs on the relationship between father and daughters, and heiresses who are both chattels and betrayers of their husbands and lovers, will be given another layer of complexity by a woman as king.

It is not surprising that an actress wants to climb this Everest of tragic roles. After Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra and Voltemba, Shakespeare did not write many good parts for the older woman. And most of those, such as

Juliet's Nurse and Mistress Quickly, are comic supporting roles rather than tragic heroines. There are also precedents for reinterpreting Lear. Nahum Tate's version, with a happy ending in which Lear is restored to his throne, replaced Shakespeare for a century and a half. It is still sometimes revived as a historical curiosity. And Sarah Siddons was the first of many women to act Hamlet. Judith Anderson played him at the age of 73, making Hamlet the eternal student prince, suitably fat and scant of breath.

And cross-dressing, with women being mistaken for men, is a key plot in Shakespeare's repertoire. For even Viola alias Cesario and Rosalind as Ganymede were first played by boys acting as girls, dressing up for a spell as boys. Miranda and Isabella, Desdemona and Cordelia herself were all originally played by boys with unbroken voices and beardless chins. So actresses playing the men's parts redress the past, and add new angles and resonances to the infinite variety of the old master.

For King Lear itself is a volcano of pity and terror. It has elements traditionally associated with comedy. A jester comments on the action. The Fool himself was played by Sybil Thorndike in a wartime production. There is a double plot. Disguises thicken that plot. So King Lear is too complex to admit an easy or definitive production. Actors clamber around its peaks and precipices. But a woman as Lear offers a new route to the summit and an interesting new view for her audience from the top.

'Dumbing down' A-level standards

From Mr V. S. Anthony and Dr J. M. Moore

Sir, Your view ("Dumbing down", leading article, February 12) that Mrs Shephard's planned reforms of post-16 education are "a comprehensive failure" will not be shared by those who were closely involved in presenting evidence to Sir Ron Dearing on ways in which improvements could be effected. Our principal objectives were to increase access, to keep up standards and to provide the means for broadening education at this level while ensuring students mastered the basic skills.

The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference has, for many years, wanted an intermediate examination or an AS level based on the first year of an A-level course. We have not seen this as likely to undermine the standards of A-level, though it will enable those who would find a full A-level course beyond them to gain some benefit from further study beyond GCSE.

The key to success is to bring sufficient flexibility to the system under the reforms now proposed. It will remain possible for students to follow a traditional A-level programme while others will be able to offer a mixture of A and AS levels. The universities will have a large say, through entrance requirements, on which of these programmes will prove most popular. Attitudes to the wisdom of accepting the modular approach vary, not least between subjects; but, if linear and modular syllabuses in any subject are to be the same, there will be as many teachers arguing that the modular approach keeps students working effectively throughout the course as there will be those who prefer a holistic end-of-course examination.

While we would have preferred more time to implement them, most of the Shephard/Dearing reforms will be welcomed.

Yours faithfully,
V. S. ANTHONY (Secretary),
J. M. MOORE (Chairman,
Academic Policy Sub-Committee),
The Headmasters' and
Headmistresses' Conference,
130 Regent Road, Leicester,
February 12.

From Mr K. J. Masters
Sir, Your leading article criticises the teaching of modular A levels. Is my last term's work on *Measure for Measure* any less meaningful for being examined when it is still alive and immediate than when it is examined a year later, when I shall have to fan the embers of my students' understanding and enjoyment?

Modules are not an easy way out. They encourage a continuous work-rate over two years of A-level study rather than the frantic last-lap review. A level is, or should be, all about imparting skills, not the cramming and regurgitation of facts.

Yours faithfully,
K. J. MASTERS,
English Department,
Scarlesbrook Hall School,
Ormskirk, Lancashire.

From Mr Costas P. Kleanthous
Sir, Why do we need more than one Examination Board for what are supposed to be national examinations of the same standard?

Yours faithfully,
COSTAS P. KLEANTHOUS,
Thatchways,
Bride Lane, Loudwater,
Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire.

Independence party

From Dr Richard North

Sir, Before claiming that the UK Independence Party (UKIP) provides me with an emotionally satisfying political home, Michael Gove ("Time to pack up, Sir James", February 10) might have asked me why I joined the party and am standing in the Wirral South by-election. I found that the UKIP, uniquely amongst our political parties, offered an intellectually consistent message, which made it attractive as a political home.

As to the "simple platform" to which he refers, I, in common with some 300 UKIP prospective parliamentary candidates, stand on the "twin track" platform of immediate withdrawal from the EU and the reconstruction of parliamentary democracy in the UK. This platform is far from simple, and involves, *inter alia*, the complex and intellectually stimulating process of creating policies which will enable the UK to forge ahead as a prosperous, independent nation, once it is released from the shackles of the Byzantine empire which is the EU.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD NORTH,
Croft Mill, Sharp Street,
Wibsey, Bradford, West Yorkshire.

Second time around

From Commander R. S. Stevenson RN (ret'd)

Sir, Surely the idea of renewing a vow which has been made "till death do us part" (report, February 8) is superfluous and only serves to devalue the original pledge.

Yours sincerely,
RONALD STEVENSON,
Ling Garth, Low Row,
Richmond, North Yorkshire,
February 9.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Justice in mandatory sentences

From Lord Derwent

Sir, Perhaps I may explain why some of us who in principle greatly dislike the idea of mandatory minimum sentences (letters, February 3, 5, 11) nevertheless supported the Government in the House of Lords on February 13 on this issue.

The maximum sentence for burglary is 14 years' imprisonment. As was pointed out in yesterday's debate by Lady Blatch, Minister of State at the Home Office, 4,400 people were sentenced for domestic burglary in the Crown Courts in 1995. Of these only 179 were sentenced to more than three years and only 14 to more than five years.

In other words, Parliament's decision that the range of sentencing should be up to 14 years has been replaced by the judges imposing their own range of up to three years in most cases. There are many examples of this belief by the judges that their view is to be preferred to that of Parliament.

If the judges are outraged at any limitation on their discretion it must also be said that many members of the public are equally outraged by the way this discretion has been exercised in recent years.

Yours faithfully,
DERWENT,
House of Lords,
February 14.

From His Honour Joseph Dean

Sir, With all respect to Lord Donaldson of Lynton (letter, February 5) and Mr Robert Milson (February 11) "the right to drive a motor vehicle" is not "a privilege". It derives from the ancient, common law right to come and go along the public highway.

The exercise of that right is regulated by the Road Traffic Acts. Similarly the right to personal liberty is subject to the criminal law and Criminal Justice Acts. Disqualification from driving involves the "curtailment" of a right, as of course does a sentence of imprisonment.

In reply to Mr Ian Cook (letter, February 11), while the Road Traffic Act 1988 does indeed contain a discretionary exemption for "special reasons" from the mandatory disqualification, these words have been interpreted by the Court of Appeal so as to exclude any question of hardship on the driver or his family.

Bloody Sunday inquiry

From Mr Desmond J. Keenan

Sir, Many voices on the nationalist side are asking for a new inquiry into the so-called "Bloody Sunday" killings of January 30, 1972 (letters, February 3, 5). Are they looking for a genuine inquiry or are they looking for a witchhunt?

The Widgery report, published in the following April, concluded that the soldiers fired after having been fired on, or thought they were being fired on. This was and is the most reasonable explanation. Yet it is rejected by the nationalists *a priori* for two reasons. The first is that it is incompatible with the mythology of Irish nationalism, which insists that the guilty British always attack the innocent Irish without cause. The other is that if a republican fired the first shot he is responsible for the deaths, which is

Hospital nutrition

From Professor Emeritus J. E. Lennard-Jones

Sir, Doctors and nurses do indeed work hard for patients, but nutrition tends to be neglected because food is regarded as part of routine care and not as an important aspect of treatment (Medical briefing, February 4; see also report, February 3).

Malnutrition is a complication of serious illness and not its inevitable consequence. Loss of more than one-tenth of body weight leads to loss of muscle strength, fatigue, apathy, depression, immobility and reduced resistance to infection. Florence Nightingale recognised that starvation is possible in the midst of plenty; current concern shows that this is still true. A positive approach to nutrition as treatment needs acceptance, as emphasised in a report published in January 1992 by the King's Fund Centre.

Doctors and nurses often do not recognise undernutrition because they are not trained to look for it and do not recognise the benefits of treating it. In

Art in action

From Mr Roy Knowles

Sir, I am in awe of Yukinori Yanagi's perseverance and resilience against boredom during his six days of tracking ants with a pen (report, February 13). The Chisenhale Gallery may be interested in my dining-room carpet. It bears a muddy trail of footprints, left by my dog in person, thereby freeing the middleman for alternative recreation.

The carpet could be said to symbolise the frailty of social controls between cohabiting species, and may thus be suitable for exhibiting as the antithesis of Mr Yanagi's symbolism of "social controls in society".

Yours sincerely,
ROY KNOWLES,
15 Chapel Lane, Cronon,
Widnes, Cheshire,
February 14.

or in many other cases (such as the example I gave in my letter of February 3) which might be thought by some to be "unjust".

My point was not to criticise these stringent provisions, but merely to contrast them with the objections now being raised "in principle" to mandatory sentences for conviction of some of the most serious crimes.

If the judiciary believe that a minimum sentence of three years' imprisonment imposed, for instance, on an adult for a third conviction of house burglary would be "quite clearly unjust" in "a significant number of cases", as is implied by Lord Donaldson, I fear they must be out of touch with public opinion.

Yours faithfully,
JOSEPH DEAN,
The Hall,
West Brabourne, Ashford, Kent,
February 14.

From Mr James Turner

Sir, The interference with liberty inflicted by a period of disqualification from driving bears no comparison with the loss of liberty that results from a prison sentence. Fairness therefore demands that each individual case is judged on its own particular merits when sentence is passed.

Even third and fourth offences of burglary may vary enormously in seriousness as between different offenders in different circumstances. As the Attorney-General is reported as saying (Law, February 11): "Judges are now very aware what is the proper range within which they should sentence. They are thinking about it more carefully than ten years ago."

True, a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment exists in respect of the offence of murder (a situation that has itself been the subject of much informed criticism in recent years), but even in that situation there is, in effect, the power to mitigate the penalty by releasing the prisoner once he has served the period fixed as the punitive element (which is done by taking account of the individual circumstances of the offence) and once it is determined that he does not present a continuing risk to the community.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES TURNER,
1 King's Bench Walk,
Temple, EC4,
February 11.

Impossible to admit

Any genuine inquiry must begin with identifying who fired the first shot. Yet any inquiries among the nationalists in this direction will be met with a wall of silence.

Hence what the nationalists are calling for is a witchhunt, the "smelling out" of the guilty British. As the Prime Minister said, if anyone has any definite information on this point let him give it to the police. But I suspect the police will wait a long time.

Lord Widgery, incidentally, was highly critical of some of the para-militaries saying that they had fired recklessly and irresponsibly. Beyond that no firm evidence of a policy of "shoot to kill" has ever been produced.

Yours sincerely,
DES KEENAN,
314 Redcliffe Walk, Chalk Hill Road,
Wembley Park, Middlesex,
February 11.

New staff college to be 'envy of all'

From Brigadier Charles McBean (ret'd)

Sir, Contrary to the opinions expressed by Field Marshal Stanier (letter, February 10) the decision to locate the new Joint Staff College at Shrivenham in Oxfordshire is one of the most significant decisions of the post-Cold War era and one which is to be warmly applauded. It has a boldness and imagination worthy of our greatest military commanders.

By concentrating the expertise of all three staff colleges on the site of the existing Royal Military College of Science (where half of Army staff training already takes place), it will create a unique and unrivalled concentration of military knowledge and expertise. Not only does the decision accord with one of the fundamental principles of war, namely the concentration of force, it will also provide the opportunity to create a world-class institution which will be the envy of all.

The staff college building at Camberley is no "treasure". Although outwardly imposing, it has little architectural merit and the instructional accommodation is more "sink school" than staff college. It cannot accommodate students of all three Services.

Far from feeling unloved, I suspect that the majority of our officers and those who instruct them will be honoured by such a considerable investment in their professional education and advancement.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES McBEAN,
Cavalry and Guards Club,
127 Piccadilly, W1,
February 11.

From Professor Lawrence Freedman

Sir, I can reassure Mr John Parfitt (letter, February 10) that academic support from King's College London for the new Joint Staff College will not simply arrive via the 9am from Paddington. A dedicated department of experienced staff will be based at the college.

The Department of War Studies has been involved closely in military education for a number of years, and has run a highly-regarded MA for the Individual Service staff colleges. Officers have been given access to top experts in all areas of international relations and defence studies from a department that recently obtained the highest rating (five-star) in the Higher Education Funding Council's research assessment exercise.

In addition, the teaching at both the interim and final versions of the staff college will depend to a great extent on staff from the Department of History and International Affairs at Greenwich. We have a long association with this department, going back to Sir John Laughton who taught at both Greenwich and King's at the turn of the century, and the working relationship continues to be extremely close.

Yours sincerely,
LAWRENCE FREEDMAN,
King's College London,
Department of War Studies,
Strand, WC2,
February 10.

Surname usage

From the Director of Music at King's College, Cambridge

Sir, Some years ago, on a choir tour in the USA, my wife, travelling as assistant mistress, was asked by a young chorister: "Mrs Cleobury, why do you call us by our Christian names, while Mr Cleobury uses our surnames?"

I changed my unmodified practice (letters, February 8) there and then and have not regretted it until this year, when the presence of no fewer than six Edwards in the choir has caused some practical problems.

Any Edwards applying for our forthcoming auditions should be assured, however, that they will suffer no discrimination.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN CLEOBURY,
King's College, Cambridge,
February 12.

From Mr Richard Scrivener

Sir, Mr G. A. A. Scriven (letter, February 8) questions the prevalence of certain "colour" surnames and the absence of others.

English surnames are broadly derivative of past occupation or office — as is his own, and indeed mine — personal description or place of origin. Hence Black and Brown signify complexion or hair colour, while Green denotes a dweller by that place.

He may care to consider several surnames I have encountered — Eighteen, Gnotbed and Puddinglat.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD SCRIVENER,
St Marks,
Buttsway, Milverton, Somerset.

Till later?

From Mr Robert Tucker

Sir, Sign displayed at an attended but closed customer service position, spotted whilst queuing recently at a building society in the City: "Cashier balancing".

Is this the banking equivalent of leaves on the track?

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT D. TUCKER,
Rubicon, off Howards Lane,
Rowtown, Surrey,
February 14.

Business letters, page 29

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

هكذا من لامل

Land of the long white cloud nets a first football winner



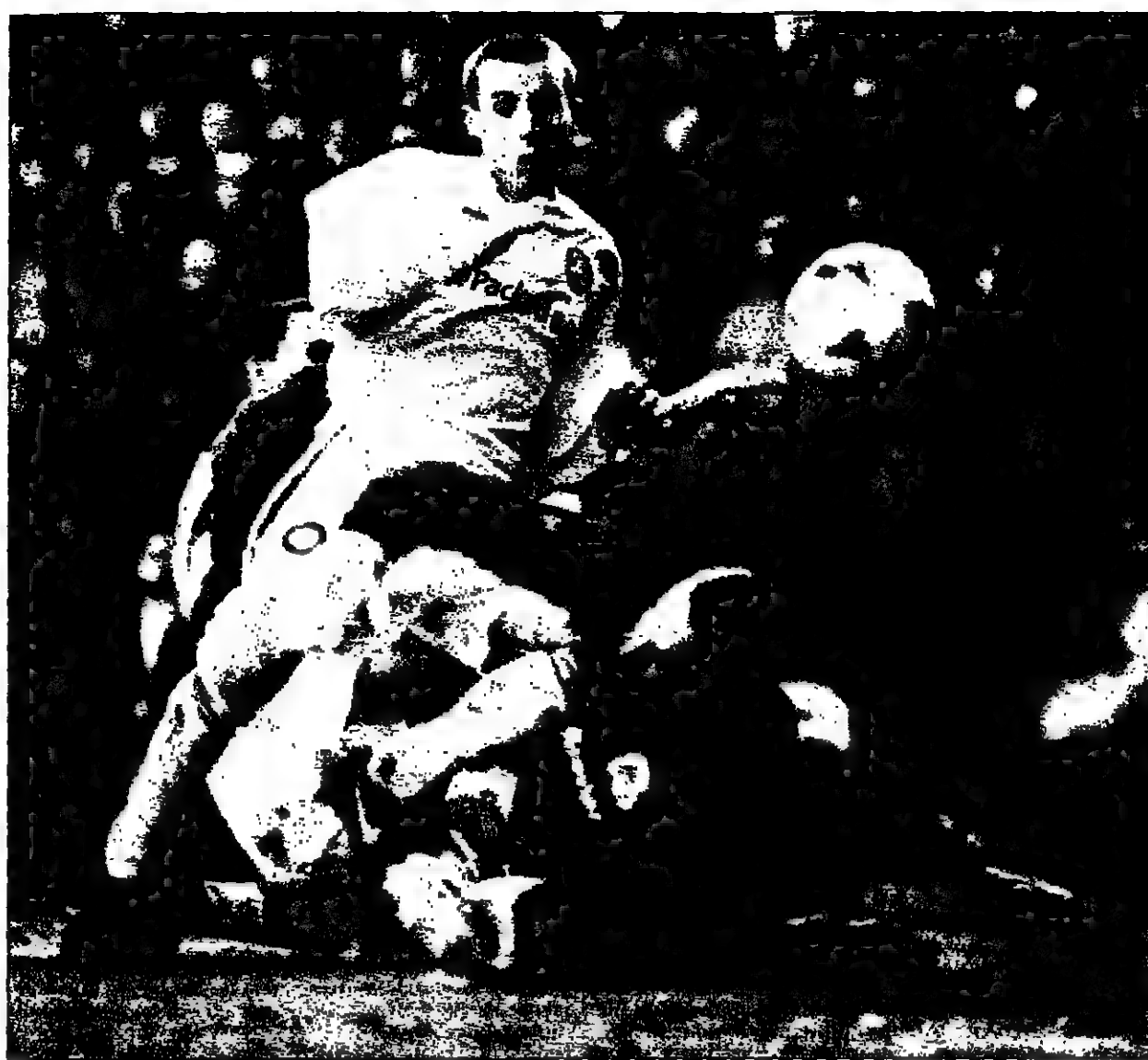
NEW ZEALAND is not a country renowned for its footballing pedigree. Both codes of rugby, cricket and long-distance running might all be cited as areas of sporting expertise on the part of its inhabitants, but the islands do not — yet — boast proud records in football.

Yet the winner this week in Interactive Team Football hails from New Zealand's North Island. Richard Keenan, of Wellington, is an Internet reader of *The Times*, and his team Sucharita carries off the £250 prize. Mr Keenan scored 33 points, with notable contributions coming from David Robertson, the Rangers defender, and Aljosa Asanovic, the Derby County midfielder player, both of whom scored goals on Saturday.

Mr Keenan is 29th in the Internet League, and nestling just outside the leading 250 selectors in the overall competition. Although New Zealand's football XI may not progress beyond the Oceania qualifying zone of the 1998 World Cup, there is clearly much knowledge of the game there. It also proves that working from afar need not be a barrier to success in ITF.

In the overall race for £50,000, Mr G. Foster, with his team Sophie And Sam, maintains his lead over John Hunt's D team, being 17 points clear this week.

If your team could be doing better, with your players lacking form and fitness, you can move into the transfer market



Bowyer scores his first goal against Portsmouth. Two goals for him were offset by Leeds United's Cup defeat



to improve your fortunes. You can use the ITF transfer system which allows you to

change up to two players each week and to adjust your team if one of your players is actually transferred out of the FA Cup, Premiership or Bell's Scottish League Premier division.

You can make transfers only by telephone. Using a Touch-tone (DTMF) telephone (most push-button telephones with a * and a hash key are Touch-tone), call the 0891 866 968 line during the times given. From outside the United Kingdom, you must call 0044 990 200 668.

When making a transfer, you must ensure that the team does not contain more than two individuals (two players or one player and a manager) from the same club.

If you are lagging behind the leading team selectors, the transfer system will be an appealing option to you in the chase for the prizes — the overall £50,000, monthly £1,000 or weekly £250.

All Interactive Team Football transfer queries should be directed to 0171-757 7016. All other inquiries can be made on 01582 483 122.

HOW THE SCORING SYSTEM WORKS IN ITF
All 1996-7 matches in the FA Cup, Premiership, FA Cup, Bell's Scottish League Premier division and Tannets Scottish Cup from August 17 count for points. Penalty shootouts do not count but results decided in this way will count for managers.

| POINTS SCORED | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| Goalkeeper | Appts | Striker | Sppts |
| Keeps clean sheet* | 3pts | Scored goal | 1pt |
| Saves penalty | 1pt | All players | 1pt |
| Full back/Central defender | 3pts | Appearance | 1pt |
| Keeps clean sheet* | 3pts | Scored hat-trick | 3pts |
| Scored goal | 1pt | Manager | 3pts |
| Midfield player | 3pts | Team wins | 1pt |
| Keeps clean sheet* | 3pts | Team draws | 1pt |
| Scored goal | 1pt | | |

| POINTS DEDUCTED | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| Goalkeeper | Sppts | Striker | Sppts |
| Concedes goal | 1pt | Concedes penalty | 1pt |
| Full back/Central defender | 1pt | Misses penalty | 1pt |
| Concedes goal | 1pt | Scored own goal | 1pt |
| All players | 1pt | Manager | 1pt |
| Start off | 1pt | Team loses | 1pt |

* must have played for 75 minutes in the match
* must have played for 45 minutes in the match



ENTER A NEW TEAM TODAY

THERE ARE BIG PRIZES TO BE WON EVERY WEEK AND EVERY MONTH

The ITF Manager of the Week and the Manager of the Month are up for grabs from now until the end of the season. Enter a team today for your chance to be a winner in 1997. The Manager of the Week or Month can be won by any team no matter where it is in the league; the prize for the Manager of the Week or Month simply goes to the person whose team scores the highest points in any one week or month.

The prize for the Manager of the Week is £250 cash, plus a £250 Sports Gift Voucher for an amateur football team in your community — as nominated by you. The Manager of the Month will receive £1,000 cash.

Enter today by following the instructions below.

Enter ITF by phone on 0891 405 011

If telephoning from outside the United Kingdom, call 44 990 100 320

1. You must use a Touch-tone (DTMF) telephone (most push-button telephones with a * and a hash key are Touch-tone).
2. Choose 1 goalkeeper, 2 full backs, 2 central defenders, 4 midfielders, 2 strikers and a manager.
3. Do not spend more than £35 million.
4. Do not choose more than two individuals (2 players or 1 player and 1 manager) from any one football club.
5. Once you have chosen your team, call the entry line, above, and follow these step-by-step instructions.

a) You must tap in (not speak) the full set of selections (using the five-digit player codes) for each of your 11 chosen players and your manager.

b) You must speak the name of your team (no more than 16 characters) your name, address, with postcode, and daytime telephone number.

c) Finally, you will be given a ten-digit personal identification number (PIN) at the end of the call. You must keep a note of this number and your chosen team as no postal notification will be sent.

NB. Any new team will only score points on future games.

0891 calls cost 45p per minute cheap rate and 50p per minute at all other times. Your call will cost approximately double if made from a pay phone. In the event of there being more than one Manager of the Week or Month, the winner will be chosen at random. All ITF rules apply, a copy of which will be made available on request.



See Day Text, page 118

HOW TO MAKE A TRANSFER IN ITF

Call 0891 866 968

If telephoning from outside the United Kingdom call 44 990 200 668.

You may make transfers only by telephone using a Touch-tone (DTMF) telephone (most push-button telephones with a * and a hash key are Touch-tone). You will need your ten-digit selector PIN, which you will have to tap in, not speak. Follow the simple instructions and tap in the five-digit codes of the players you are transferring.

You may only make transfers in one team per telephone call. If you have entered two teams and want to make transfers in both, you must make two separate calls.

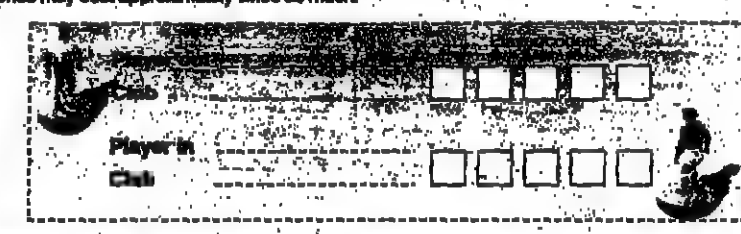
You may transfer two (but no more than two) individuals (two players or one player and a manager) during a transfer week. A player being transferred out must be replaced by one from the same category and you must keep to the team format of a goalkeeper, two full backs, two central defenders, four midfield players, two strikers and a manager. You must not exceed the £35 million budget and have no more than two individuals from the same club. Incorrect transfers will be rejected and your team will remain in its previous form.

The transfer week runs from 00.01 on Tuesday to midnight the following Monday. Transfers made before noon each day will become effective immediately. Transfers made after noon will become effective for matches played after noon on the following day.

Your new player only starts to score points for you when his transfer is registered. The current score of the player transferred out remains part of your team score but he then ceases to score for you.

If a player or manager moves teams during the season, it may affect the composition of your team. You must adjust your team by using the transfer system to avoid missing out on points.

Calls will be charged at 45p per minute cheap rate, 50p per minute at other times. Calls made from public telephones may cost approximately twice as much.



THIS WEEK'S TRANSFERS

| Pos | Team | Player's name | Pts |
|-------|---|------------------|--------|
| 11923 | IN | Ben Roberts | 11.50m |
| 61422 | IN | Bobby Williamson | 20.73m |
| 50203 | MOVED | John Harrison | 23.60m |
| | (from Arsenal) | | |
| 21603 | OUT | Neil Lewis | 20.50m |
| 45310 | OUT | Griffiths Potts | 20.50m |
| 55595 | OUT | Steve Jones | 21.90m |
| | (to Arsenal) | | |
| | LOANED PLAYERS | | |
| | M. Gabbard (Derby to Oxford United, two weeks), J. Lee (Nottingham Forest to Charlton, two weeks), D. Poyser (Charlton to Norwich, three weeks) | | |
| | Loan periods subject to illustration | | |

THE LEADING 250 ENTRIES IN THE TIMES

| Pos | Team | Player's name | Pts |
|-----|-----------------------|---------------|-----|
| 1 | Sophie And Sam | (G Foster) | 590 |
| 2 | John Hunt Tawnton D | (J Hunt) | 573 |
| 3 | Beaston Celtic | (G McGovern) | 561 |
| 4 | James Boys Three | (M Jones) | 560 |
| 5 | John Hunt Tawnton H | (J Hunt) | 557 |
| 6 | Daggers | (V Cox) | 551 |
| 7 | James Boys Eight | (M Jones) | 548 |
| 8 | Nobby | (J Brown) | 547 |
| 9 | AB 4 | (A Boyland) | 547 |
| 10 | Nobby 4 | (J Brown) | 546 |
| 11 | Brady's Team | (S Howes) | 545 |
| 12 | Edmo Unt | (D Edmondson) | 544 |
| 13 | Nobby 33 | (J Brown) | 544 |
| 14 | James Boys One | (M Jones) | 541 |
| 15 | Ref Is Back To Kill 5 | (J Gohli) | 541 |
| 16 | John Hunt Tawnton G | (J Hunt) | 541 |
| 17 | Pin Ups Two | (P Tustler) | 538 |
| 18 | Nobby 28 | (J Brown) | 535 |
| 19 | Nobby 11 | (J Brown) | 535 |
| 20 | Wendell AFC 5 | (J Brown) | 534 |
| 21 | Turner's Earners 5 | (P Turner) | 532 |
| 22 | Isurus | (S Wells) | 531 |
| 23 | Purple Rats | (S Gohli) | 531 |
| 24 | Bob's Boys 2 | (R Calder) | 531 |
| 25 | Turner's Earners 6 | (J Brown) | 531 |
| 26 | John Hunt Tawnton E | (J Brown) | 530 |
| 27 | Nobby 32 | (J Brown) | 530 |
| 28 | Jedberwocky | (P A Amos) | 529 |
| 29 | Team C | (A Jones) | 529 |
| 30 | Storm | (P Miles) | 528 |
| 31 | Beaston United | (S Wells) | 528 |
| 32 | Where's Ray Gone? | (P Brown) | 528 |
| 33 | Nobby 21 | (J Brown) | 527 |
| 34 | Hazley's Mob | (C Hunter) | 527 |
| 35 | How's Ark | (G P Dolan) | 526 |
| 36 | Subwith Ltd 5 | (S Lacombe) | 525 |
| 37 | Kinky Imports | (S Fraser) | 525 |
| 38 | Turner's Earners 3 | (P Turner) | 523 |
| 39 | John Hunt Tawnton F | (J Hunt) | 523 |
| 40 | John Hunt Tawnton C | (J Hunt) | 523 |
| 41 | James Boys Six | (M Jones) | 520 |
| 42 | East Three Boys | (L Clark) | 519 |
| 43 | Autism | (S Shipley) | 518 |
| 44 | Ref Against Cye | (M Baber) | 518 |
| 45 | AFC | (M Ward) | 517 |
| 46 | Inter The Stand | (A Lane) | 517 |
| 47 | Gangsters | (M MacMillan) | 516 |
| 48 | Murphy's Magicians | (G Gardner) | 516 |
| 49 | John Hunt Tawnton 1 | (J Brown) | 515 |
| 50 | Nobby 22 | (J Brown) | 515 |
| 51 | Born Losers | (P Fadden) | 514 |
| 52 | Bob's Boys 4 | (R Calder) | 514 |
| 53 | Nobby 5 | (J Brown) | 514 |
| 54 | You're Not Very Well | (R Laskowski) | 513 |
| 55 | Patrick Bilbao 3 | (J Hamilton) | 513 |
| 56 | Always Portugal 1 | (V Guzman) | 513 |
| 57 | A2 | (P Farrel) | 513 |
| 58 | Nobby 1 | (J Brown) | 513 |
| 59 | Dour Rangers 3 | (J Clayton) | 512 |
| 60 | Teddy Three | (B Bean) | 511 |
| 61 | Tully's Topp | (D Tully) | 511 |
| 62 | BCFC 1996 | (J Braham) | 510 |
| 63 | Thorn Forestry FC | (M Horan) | 508 |
| 64 | 12 Angry Men | (D Cook) | 508 |
| 65 | A | (M Corless) | 508 |
| 66 | Scholar For Goals | (K Booth) | 507 |
| 67 | Joking | (P Palmer) | 507 |
| 68 | PJ Thistle | (R Newbould) | 507 |
| 69 | Inter The Whist | (M Ward) | 506 |
| 70 | Booby Boys | (R Cook) | 506 |

FIND OUT HOW YOUR TEAM IS DOING



Check your points total and your ranking. You need a Touch-tone (DTMF) telephone (most push-button telephones with a * and a hash key are Touch-tone) and your ten-digit selector's PIN. Calls made from public telephones may cost approximately twice as much.

| Pos | Team | Player's name | Pts |
|-----|-----------------------|----------------|-----|
| 71 | Bladderburners | (P Walters) | 506 |
| 72 | Caroline 8 | (A Luckhurst) | 506 |
| 73 | Ref Is Back To Kill 6 | (J Gohli) | 506 |
| 74 | Nobby 14 | (J Brown) | 506 |
| 75 | Babes United | (M Baber) | 505 |
| 76 | AIN | (J Staszewicz) | 504 |
| 77 | NST Monks | (A Bates) | 504 |
| 78 | JJB Sports | (S Roberts) | 503 |
| 79 | Krytonite 2 | (R Calder) | 503 |
| 80 | Bob's Boys 1 | (J Brown) | 502 |
| 81 | Nobby 23 | (J Brown) | 502 |
| 82 | Ball Whiskers | (J Murray) | 501 |
| 83 | Nobby 34 | (J Brown) | 501 |
| 84 | East Four | (J Fisher) | 500 |
| 85 | 1 Hare Alun Hansen | (V Cox) | 500 |
| 86 | Concrete Bangers | (S Mingle) | 500 |
| 87 | Bob's Boys 3 | (R Calder) | 499 |
| 88 | Alaska FC | (R Calder) | 498 |
| 89 | Jan 2 | (J Clayton) | 498 |
| 90 | Caroline 10 | (A Luckhurst) | 498 |
| 91 | Neil Madrid | (N Partridge) | 498 |
| 92 | C U O K | (G Wells) | 498 |
| 93 | Nobby 20 | (J Brown) | 498 |
| 94 | Goalkeepers | (D Curzon) | 498 |
| 95 | Gaelic | (R Howe) | 498 |
| 96 | Bythe Spartans | (T Glynn) | 498 |
| 97 | Bob's Boys 5 | (J Murray) | 497 |
| 98 | John Hunt Tawnton B | (J Hunt) | 497 |
| 99 | Crooky Boys | (R Cook) | 497 |
| 100 | Langdon Longbells | (M Ward) | 497 |
| 101 | Nobby 25 | (J Brown) | 497 |
| 102 | Nobby 12 | (J Brown) | 497 |
| 103 | Wally's Best | (L Simpson) | 497 |
| 104 | Inter The Sun | (M Ward) | 497 |
| 105 | Billy No Maths XI | (M Bremner) | 497 |
| 106 | Enid 2 | (J Haggard) | 497 |
| 107 | Club 18-30 Goals | (A Robson) | 497 |
| 108 | Nobby 7 | (J Brown) | 497 |
| 109 | Mama FC | (M Baber) | 497 |
| 110 | Layton's Lions 7 | (R Layton) | 497 |
| 111 | Appendix FC | (W Heslop) | 497 |

| Pos | Team | Player's name | Pts |
|-----|-----------------------|--------------------|-----|
| 112 | Turner's Earners 4 | (P Turner) | 490 |
| 113 | Stylorest | (A Burton) | 490 |
| 114 | Ref Is Back To Kill 7 | (J Gohli) | 489 |
| 115 | Rock Station | (S Gohli) | 488 |
| 116 | Robbie-Team 1 | (M Roberts) | 488 |
| 117 | Tur | (P Turner) | 488 |
| 118 | PUS Rovers | (P J Butler) | 487 |
| 119 | EA's Unbeaten | (E J Kitchner) | 487 |
| 120 | Be About Revenge C | (R Gohli) | 487 |
| 121 | Trouble Shooters | (P Pitt) | 487 |
| 122 | Star Chamber | (M MacMillan) | 486 |
| 123 | Inter The Unknown | (P Bennett) | 485 |
| 124 | Paradox Eagles | (S Abbott) | 485 |
| 125 | Inter The Magic | (J Pragon) | 485 |
| 126 | Inter The Pub | (M Ward) | 485 |
| 127 | Garforth Seashore | (J Douglas) | 484 |
| 128 | Come On You Rocks | (no name) | 483 |
| 129 | DLS 2 | (D Senton) | 482 |
| 130 | 4 4 2 | (R Gohli) | 482 |
| 131 | Ref Is Back To Kill 8 | (J Gohli) | 482 |
| 132 | Xpist Mission | (M Jackson) | 482 |
| 133 | Alaska | (J Fyle) | 482 |
| 134 | Kingsbury Tn 1 | (D F King) | 482 |
| 135 | Orville Classics | (J Bradshaw) | 481 |
| 136 | Superstars | (P Taylor) | 481 |
| 137 | Darwin's Soldiers | (V Cox) | 481 |
| 138 | Turner's Earners 1 | (P Turner) | 481 |
| 139 | Vet2 | (K Howson) | 481 |
| 140 | Alaska Machine | (P Ford) | 480 |
| 141 | Dynamite XI | (S Miller) | 480 |
| 142 | Robbie-Team 2 | (M Preston) | 480 |
| 143 | John Hunt Tawnton A | (J Hunt) | 480 |
| 144 | Caroline 9 | (A Luckhurst) | 479 |
| 145 | Ref Is Back To Kill 7 | (J Gohli) | 479 |
| 146 | Black United 1 | (J Gohli) | 479 |
| 147 | The Damocles 1 | (D Shields) | 479 |
| 148 | Drabos | (D Edbrookstainer) | 479 |
| 149 | Inter The Net | (M Ward) | 478 |
| 150 | The Loggers | (C Wright) | 478 |
| 151 | Infinity George | (M Roberts) | 478 |
| 152 | Det Cos 2 | (M Roberts) | 478 |
| 153 | Sid In A Carry On | (J James) | 478 |
| 154 | Sky Rockets | (K Farrel) | 478 |
| 155 | Football Junction | (S Mingle) | 478 |
| 156 | Oct95-ITF Champ | (M Stadden) | 478 |
| 157 | The Great Dane | (K Booth) | 478 |
| 158 | The Instructions | (K Booth) | 478 |
| 159 | Wallymo Mousers | (K Booth) | 478 |
| 160 | Wally's Wonders | (W Chanson) | 478 |
| 161 | AS | (K Farrel) | 478 |
| 162 | Triple Top Tan | (P Bailey) | 478 |
| 163 | Jason's Boys Four | (J Ganning) | 478 |
| 164 | March Pass | (M McCann) | 478 |
| 165 | Fortune Hunters | (K Farrel) | 478 |
| 166 | Portus | (W Clarke) | 478 |
| 167 | Demolition Man | (J Murray) | 478 |
| 168 | Bobwith Ltd 3 | (M Lacombe) | 478 |
| 169 | Top Benums | (M Bottomley) | 478 |
| 170 | Old Cameronians | (R J Brown) | 478 |
| 171 | Vet1 | (K Howson) | 478 |
| 172 | Katy's Best | (P Linewry) | 478 |
| 173 | Le Bouctesters | (J Robson) | 478 |
| 174 | Halschies | (D Bish) | 478 |
| 175 | Totted Five | (E Kaby) | 478 |
| 176 | Mean Fantasy League | (M Madden) | 478 |
| 177 | Bugle Harries | (D Benis) | 478 |
| 178 | Yehoyair | (G Davidson) | 478 |
| 179 | Bob Hope And No Hope | (T Blythe) | 478 |
| 180 | Mafia | (R Lockyer) | 478 |

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|---------------------|-----|
| Pos | Team | Player's name | Pts |
| 181 | Me Miffled | (J B Portwood) | 471 |
| 182 | Murphy's Mob | (D Anderson) | 471 |
| 183 | St Angles Academy 1 | (S Wells) | 471 |
| 184 | Halschies Huggle | (H A Raimon) | 471 |
| 185 | Inter Outers | (R Johnson) | 471 |
| 186 | Waterfall FC | (M Kilmwood) | 471 |
| 187 | Sally In A Towel | (K James) | 471 |
| 188 | Stoke's Dream | (C A Kitchner) | 470 |
| 189 | James Boys XI | (P Brown) | 470 |
| 190 | Shank Attack | (R Stadelton) | 470 |
| 191 | Panama Team 1 | (S Panham) | 470 |
| 192 | Three Tabletoppers | (M A Kennedy) | 470 |
| 193 | C | (P Poole) | 470 |
| 194 | Pall One | (P Patel) | 469 |
| 195 | Paul's Sexy Eleven | (T Eden) | 469 |
| 196 | Stoke's Mob | (M Sims) | 469 |
| 197 | AC Cambridge | (L Hor) | 469 |
| 198 | Jack's Nightmares | (N J Lane) | 469 |
| 199 | Doppelgangaword | (J Whaling) | 469 |
| 200 | Leaky's Legmen | (L Michaelis) | 469 |
| 201 | Refined Dons | (R Yates) | 469 |
| 202 | The Red Devils | (K Booth) | 469 |
| 203 | Attention House | (G Betchelor) | 469 |
| 204 | Diplomatic Risk | (S Pritchard) | 469 |
| 205 | Foxy | (M Fox) | 469 |
| 206 | Winnor | (M Baber) | 469 |
| 207 | Beyond Fault | (P Foster) | 469 |
| 208 | Lewis Boys A | (D Lewis) | 469 |
| 209 | Sam Shanks | (S Shanks) | 469 |
| 210 | Mullock's Moustros | (T Mullock) | 469 |
| 208 | Esbeys 1st XI | (S Stadelton) | 469 |
| 208 | Sporty Big Bone | (J Szlachetkiewicz) | 469 |
| 208 | Lynne's Lions | (L Horne) | 469 |
| 208 | Botat United 2 | (J Pull) | 469 |
| 208 | Burnet Borge | (A Sharpe) | 469 |
| 208 | Ugria Boys | (K Murrie) | 469 |
| 208 | Clive From Down Under | (A Kilmwood) | 469 |
| 208 | Delfish | (J Nelson) | 469 |
| 208 | Mim City Free Zone | (D Ingham) | 469 |
| 221 | Flying Pigs | (M Macmillan) | 469 |
| 221 | Fenelon United | (E Cowan) | 469 |
| 221 | Des Boot | (D A Sutton) | 469 |
| 221 | | (M Reed) | 469 |
| 221 | Longhair Lads | (N Finch) | 469 |
| 221 | Ferr Aseniamelos | (A Kilmwood) | 469 |
| 221 | Aim | (T Miles) | 469 |
| 221 | Powerage | (J Doughty) | 469 |
| 221 | The Omastars | (C C Venns) | 469 |
| 230 | Mapleapples | (F Reid) | 469 |
| 230 | Winnor loves Sport | (J Eaton) | 469 |
| 230 | Cooldies Gamers | (S Cook) | 469 |
| 230 | Luscombe All Stars | (W Cowen) | 469 |
| 230 | Scooby's Panspex II | (E G Ryan) | 469 |
| 230 | De Morgan's Murders | (D Morgan) | 469 |
| 236 | Dave's First XI | (D Gabel) | 469 |
| 236 | Tagore's 1st XI | (C Tagore) | 469 |
| 236 | Toby's Terrors 10 | (P Whitley) | 469 |
| 236 | AJK | (K Hughes) | 469 |
| 236 | GSMS | (A Muir) | 469 |
| 241 | Grinners Army | (S Gray) | 469 |
| 241 | Cholin Chic 89 | (G Scariff) | 469 |
| 241 | Celtic Foresters | (E Thomas) | 469 |
| 241 | WWWE | (E Wicks) | 469 |
| 246 | Bob's Boys 6 | (R Calder) | 469 |
| 246 | Don 3 | (D Shuter) | 469 |
| 246 | Shot On Sight 2 | (P Goldswain) | 469 |
| 246 | Net Busters | (D Curzon) | 469 |
| 246 | Caught Lucy | (C Wright) | 469 |
| 246 | Exel | | 469 |

The ITF players, their points and their values if you are considering the transfer option

| Code | Name | Team | Em | Pts | Wk | Ch |
|-------|----------------|---------------------|------|-----|-----|----|
| 10101 | M Watt | Aberdeen | 1.50 | +5 | -3 | |
| 10102 | N Walker | Aberdeen | 1.00 | 0 | -14 | |
| 10201 | D Seaman | Arsenal | 5.00 | 0 | +33 | |
| 10202 | V Bartram | Arsenal | 0.75 | 0 | 0 | |
| 10203 | J Lukic | Arsenal | 0.75 | +5 | -5 | |
| 10301 | M Bosnich | Aston Villa | 3.50 | 0 | +8 | |
| 10302 | M Oakes | Aston Villa | 1.00 | 0 | +19 | |
| 10401 | T Flowers | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | -1 | -1 | |
| 10402 | R Howie | Blackburn Rovers | 2.00 | 0 | +4 | |
| 10501 | G Marshall | Blackburn Rovers | 3.50 | 0 | -1 | |
| 10502 | S Kerr | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +17 | |
| 10601 | D Kharin | Blackburn Rovers | 2.50 | 0 | +10 | |
| 10602 | K Hitchcock | Blackburn Rovers | 2.00 | 0 | -28 | |
| 10603 | F Grodas | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +3 | |
| 10701 | S Ogrizovic | Coventry City | 1.50 | 0 | -15 | |
| 10702 | J Filan | Coventry City | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | |
| 10801 | M Taylor | Derby County | 1.00 | 0 | 0 | |
| 10802 | R Hault | Derby County | 1.00 | 0 | 0 | |
| 10901 | A Maxwell | Dundee United | 0.50 | 0 | +10 | |
| 10902 | L Key | Dundee United | 0.50 | 0 | +4 | |
| 11001 | I Westwater | Dundee United | 0.50 | 0 | -37 | |
| 11002 | N Southall | Dundee United | 0.50 | 0 | -22 | |
| 11101 | P Gerard | Everton | 2.50 | 0 | -1 | |
| 11102 | G Rousset | Everton | 1.50 | 0 | -20 | |
| 11201 | J Leighton | Hibernian | 1.50 | 0 | -20 | |
| 11202 | D Laskovic | Hibernian | 1.00 | 0 | +32 | |
| 11301 | M Beesley | Leeds United | 1.50 | 0 | +5 | |
| 11302 | P Evans | Leeds United | 0.25 | 0 | 0 | |
| 11401 | N Martyn | Leeds United | 2.50 | 0 | +24 | |
| 11501 | K Poole | Leeds United | 1.00 | 0 | -20 | |
| 11601 | K Keller | Leeds United | 1.00 | 0 | -20 | |
| 11701 | D James | Liverpool | 5.00 | 0 | +23 | |
| 11702 | A Warner | Liverpool | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | |
| 11801 | P Schumacher | Manchester United | 1.50 | 0 | +8 | |
| 11802 | R van der Gouw | Manchester United | 1.00 | 0 | -20 | |
| 11901 | G Walsh | Middlesbrough | 1.50 | 0 | -23 | |
| 11902 | A Miller | Middlesbrough | 1.50 | 0 | -24 | |
| 12001 | S Thompson | Middlesbrough | 1.50 | 0 | -23 | |
| 12101 | S Hlop | Newcastle United | 4.00 | 0 | -15 | |
| 12102 | P Smedley | Newcastle United | 3.00 | 0 | 0 | |
| 12201 | M Crossley | Nottingham Forest | 2.50 | 0 | -37 | |
| 12202 | A Fettes | Nottingham Forest | 0.75 | 0 | 0 | |
| 12203 | T Wright | Nottingham Forest | 0.75 | 0 | 0 | |
| 12301 | S Thomson | Raith Rovers | 0.50 | 0 | -32 | |
| 12401 | A Goram | Rangers | 5.00 | 0 | +44 | |
| 12501 | K Pressman | Sheffield Wednesday | 2.00 | 0 | +18 | |
| 12502 | M Clarke | Sheffield Wednesday | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | |
| 12601 | D Beasant | Southampton | 1.00 | 0 | -28 | |
| 12602 | N Moss | Southampton | 1.00 | 0 | -2 | |
| 12701 | M Taylor | Sunderland | 0.50 | 0 | -18 | |
| 12702 | P Pers | Sunderland | 1.00 | 0 | -18 | |
| 12801 | A Coton | Sunderland | 1.00 | 0 | -18 | |
| 12802 | I Walker | Tottenham Hotspur | 3.50 | 0 | -7 | |
| 12901 | E Baardsen | Tottenham Hotspur | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | |
| 12902 | L Miodoski | West Ham United | 2.00 | 0 | -21 | |
| 13001 | S Maestroni | West Ham United | 0.50 | 0 | +5 | |
| 13002 | N Sullivan | Wimbledon | 1.00 | 0 | -12 | |
| 13003 | P Head | Wimbledon | 1.00 | 0 | 0 | |



Asanovic scores from the penalty spot to maintain his status as one of ITF's most valuable midfield players

| Code | Name | Team | Em | Pts | Wk | Ch |
|-------|---------------|-------------------|------|-----|-------|----|
| 42608 | P Tisdale | Southampton | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | |
| 42609 | M Robinson | Southampton | 0.25 | 0 | +6 | |
| 42610 | G Potter | Southampton | 0.50 | 0 | +2 | |
| 42611 | E Berkovic | Southampton | 1.00 | 0 | +19 | |
| 42701 | M Gray | Sunderland | 2.50 | 0 | +29 | |
| 42702 | S Agnew | Sunderland | 1.50 | 0 | +18 | |
| 42703 | A Rose | Sunderland | 1.50 | 0 | +11 | |
| 42704 | P Bracewell | Sunderland | 0.75 | 0 | +32 | |
| 42705 | M Smith | Sunderland | 1.00 | 0 | +8 | |
| 42801 | D Anderson | Tottenham Hotspur | 5.50 | 0 | +2+10 | |
| 42802 | R Fox | Tottenham Hotspur | 4.00 | 0 | +2 | |
| 42803 | D Howells | Tottenham Hotspur | 2.00 | 0 | +2 | |
| 42804 | J Dorell | Tottenham Hotspur | 1.50 | 0 | +2 | |
| 42805 | A Sinton | Tottenham Hotspur | 1.50 | 0 | +2 | |
| 42806 | R Rosenthal | Tottenham Hotspur | 2.50 | 0 | +31 | |
| 42809 | A Nielsen | Tottenham Hotspur | 2.00 | 0 | +1+26 | |
| 42902 | I Bishop | West Ham United | 2.00 | 0 | +34 | |
| 42903 | M Hughes | West Ham United | 1.50 | 0 | +1+17 | |
| 42904 | J Wilson | West Ham United | 1.50 | 0 | +15 | |
| 42905 | S Lazaridis | West Ham United | 0.25 | 0 | +11 | |
| 42907 | R Earle | Wimbledon | 4.00 | 0 | +3+51 | |
| 43002 | O Leonhardson | Wimbledon | 2.50 | 0 | +3+30 | |
| 43003 | M Gayle | Wimbledon | 1.50 | 0 | +28 | |
| 43004 | V Jones | Wimbledon | 0.50 | 0 | +37 | |
| 43005 | N Ardley | Wimbledon | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | |
| 43006 | S Casbedine | Wimbledon | 0.25 | 0 | +1 | |
| 43007 | P Farr | Wimbledon | 0.25 | 0 | +1 | |

| Code | Name | Team | Em | Pts | Wk | Ch |
|-------|-----------------|------------------|------|-----|-------|----|
| 50101 | S Booth | Aberdeen | 4.50 | 0 | +1+9 | |
| 50102 | D Shearer | Aberdeen | 3.00 | 0 | +6 | |
| 50103 | W Doores | Aberdeen | 5.00 | 0 | +1+32 | |
| 50201 | I Wright | Arsenal | 7.00 | 0 | +1+54 | |
| 50202 | D Bergkamp | Arsenal | 3.00 | 0 | +1+27 | |
| 50203 | J Hartson | Arsenal | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | |
| 50205 | C Kwomye | Arsenal | 7.50 | 0 | +56 | |
| 50301 | D York | Aston Villa | 5.00 | 0 | +29 | |
| 50302 | S Milosavljevic | Aston Villa | 4.00 | 0 | +14 | |
| 50303 | T Johnson | Aston Villa | 2.00 | 0 | +8 | |
| 50401 | J Joachim | Aston Villa | 2.00 | 0 | +8 | |
| 50402 | K Gallacher | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +37 | |
| 50403 | C Sutton | Blackburn Rovers | 2.50 | 0 | +3 | |
| 50405 | G Fenton | Blackburn Rovers | 1.00 | 0 | 0 | |
| 50406 | N Gudmundsson | Blackburn Rovers | 7.00 | 0 | +43 | |
| 50501 | P van Hoolbeek | Blackburn Rovers | 6.00 | 0 | +65 | |
| 50502 | I Cadee | Blackburn Rovers | 5.00 | 0 | +32 | |
| 50601 | G Vlati | Blackburn Rovers | 5.00 | 0 | +32 | |
| 50602 | M Hughes | Blackburn Rovers | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | |
| 50605 | M Stein | Blackburn Rovers | 5.00 | 0 | +1+29 | |
| 50608 | G Zola | Blackburn Rovers | 5.00 | 0 | +1+27 | |
| 50701 | N Whelan | Blackburn Rovers | 6.00 | 0 | +26 | |
| 50702 | D Dublin | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +3 | |
| 50705 | P Ndlovu | Blackburn Rovers | 0.50 | 0 | +3 | |
| 50801 | D Huckerby | Blackburn Rovers | 0.50 | 0 | +3+23 | |
| 50802 | M Gabbadini | Blackburn Rovers | 2.00 | 0 | +17 | |
| 50803 | A Ward | Blackburn Rovers | 1.00 | 0 | +17 | |
| 50804 | R Williams | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +1 | |
| 50903 | K O'Sullivan | Blackburn Rovers | 2.00 | 0 | +12 | |
| 51002 | S Petrie | Blackburn Rovers | 2.00 | 0 | +3+32 | |
| 51003 | D Fergusson | Blackburn Rovers | 4.00 | 0 | +35 | |
| 51004 | N Bamby | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +30 | |
| 51005 | G Stuart | Blackburn Rovers | 2.00 | 0 | +3 | |
| 51006 | P Ridsout | Blackburn Rovers | 1.50 | 0 | +7 | |
| 51007 | J Robertson | Blackburn Rovers | 3.50 | 0 | +44 | |
| 51008 | C Cameron | Blackburn Rovers | 3.50 | 0 | +2+48 | |
| 51009 | D Beckford | Blackburn Rovers | 0.50 | 0 | +18 | |
| 51010 | K Wright | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +39 | |
| 51011 | D Jackson | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +3+40 | |
| 51012 | P Wright | Blackburn Rovers | 7.00 | 0 | 0 | |
| 51013 | A Young | Blackburn Rovers | 2.50 | 0 | +27 | |
| 51014 | I Rush | Blackburn Rovers | 3.50 | 0 | +28 | |
| 51015 | B Deane | Blackburn Rovers | 2.50 | 0 | +1+27 | |
| 51016 | S Claridge | Blackburn Rovers | 2.50 | 0 | +4+32 | |
| 51017 | E Heskey | Blackburn Rovers | 0.75 | 0 | +1+2 | |
| 51018 | M Robins | Blackburn Rovers | 0.75 | 0 | +1+23 | |
| 51019 | I Marshall | Blackburn Rovers | 9.00 | 0 | +50 | |
| 51020 | R Fowler | Blackburn Rovers | 8.00 | 0 | +36 | |
| 51021 | E Cantona | Blackburn Rovers | 5.00 | 0 | +36 | |
| 51022 | P Scholes | Blackburn Rovers | 4.50 | 0 | +6 | |
| 51023 | A Cole | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +38 | |
| 51024 | O G. Solis | Blackburn Rovers | 5.00 | 0 | +1+50 | |
| 51025 | P Ravenhill | Blackburn Rovers | 2.50 | 0 | +1+17 | |
| 51026 | T Coyne | Blackburn Rovers | 2.00 | 0 | +1+32 | |
| 51027 | O Coyne | Blackburn Rovers | 1.50 | 0 | +17 | |
| 51028 | D Arnott | Blackburn Rovers | 1.00 | 0 | +46 | |
| 51029 | A Shearer | Blackburn Rovers | 8.50 | 0 | +46 | |
| 51030 | L Ferdinand | Blackburn Rovers | 6.50 | 0 | +8 | |
| 51031 | F Aspinall | Blackburn Rovers | 5.00 | 0 | +29 | |
| 51032 | P Beasley | Blackburn Rovers | 3.50 | 0 | +1+32 | |
| 51033 | D Saunders | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +1+10 | |
| 51034 | B Roy | Blackburn Rovers | 1.50 | 0 | +7 | |
| 51035 | P McGregor | Blackburn Rovers | 1.50 | 0 | +1+33 | |
| 51036 | K Campbell | Blackburn Rovers | 1.50 | 0 | +7 | |
| 51037 | J Lee | Blackburn Rovers | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | |
| 51038 | S Howe | Blackburn Rovers | 0.50 | 0 | +1 | |
| 51039 | A Silenzi | Blackburn Rovers | 2.00 | 0 | +1+42 | |
| 51040 | P Duffield | Blackburn Rovers | 8.00 | 0 | +1+8 | |
| 51041 | G Durie | Blackburn Rovers | 5.00 | 0 | +35 | |
| 51042 | E Anderson | Blackburn Rovers | 5.00 | 0 | +36 | |
| 51043 | A McCole | Blackburn Rovers | 6.00 | 0 | 0 | |
| 51044 | P van Vossan | Blackburn Rovers | 4.00 | 0 | +3 | |
| 51045 | M Bridges | Blackburn Rovers | 2.50 | 0 | +1+12 | |
| 51046 | D Hirst | Blackburn Rovers | 2.50 | 0 | +29 | |
| 51047 | G Whittingham | Blackburn Rovers | 0.50 | 0 | 0 | |
| 51048 | O Donaldson | Blackburn Rovers | 2.00 | 0 | +1+15 | |
| 51049 | R Humphreys | Blackburn Rovers | 7.00 | 0 | +31 | |
| 51050 | M. O'Sullivan | Blackburn Rovers | 2.00 | 0 | +34 | |
| 51051 | P O'Sullivan | Blackburn Rovers | 1.00 | 0 | +5 | |
| 51052 | P Stewart | Blackburn Rovers | 1.00 | 0 | +18 | |
| 51053 | C Russell | Blackburn Rovers | 1.00 | 0 | +18 | |
| 51054 | D Kelly | Blackburn Rovers | 0.50 | 0 | +2 | |
| 51055 | L. Howey | Blackburn Rovers | 0.50 | 0 | +12 | |
| 51056 | M. Quinn | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +7 | |
| 51057 | N. Quinn | Blackburn Rovers | 7.00 | 0 | +1+19 | |
| 51058 | E. Sheringham | Blackburn Rovers | 8.00 | 0 | +19 | |
| 51059 | C. Armstrong | Blackburn Rovers | 0.75 | 0 | +5 | |
| 51060 | R. Allen | Blackburn Rovers | 3.50 | 0 | +1+14 | |
| 51061 | S. Jansen | Blackburn Rovers | 2.00 | 0 | +1+3 | |
| 51062 | W. Smith | Blackburn Rovers | 1.50 | 0 | +1+1 | |
| 51063 | P. Kibson | Blackburn Rovers | 1.50 | 0 | +1+2 | |
| 51064 | S. Jones | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +1+12 | |
| 51065 | D. Holdsworth | Blackburn Rovers | 3.00 | 0 | +1+40 | |
| 51066 | E. Eklou | Blackburn Rovers | 1.50 | 0 | +1+4 | |
| 51067 | J. Goodman | Blackburn Rovers | 0.75 | 0 | 0 | |
| 51068 | P. Field | Blackburn Rovers | 0.75 | 0 | +5 | |
| 51069 | G. Francis | Blackburn Rovers | 2.00 | 0 | +1+9 | |
| 51070 | H. Redknapp | Blackburn Rovers | 1.00 | 0 | +3+44 | |
| 51071 | J. Kinnear | Blackburn Rovers | 1.00 | 0 | +3+44 | |

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| 25 | 50801 | J Schoutgeer | Derby County | 2.00 | |
| 24 | 50802 | M Cabral | Derby County | 2.00 | |
| 25 | 50803 | A Ward | Derby County | 1.00 | |
| 0 | 50804 | R Williams | Derby County | 1.00 | |
| 0 | 50903 | K Olafsson | Dundee United | 2.00 | |
| +37 | 51001 | A Moore | Dunfermline | 2.00 | |
| +1 | 51002 | S Petrie | Dunfermline | 6.00 | |
| +3 | 51101 | D Ferguson | Everton | 2.00 | |
| +12 | 51101 | N Barmby | Everton | 4.00 | |
| +20 | 51102 | G Stuart | Everton | 3.00 | |
| +12 | 51102 | P Rideout | Everton | 2.00 | |
| +25 | 51105 | M Branch | Everton | 1.50 | |
| +26 | 51201 | C Robertson | Hearts | 3.50 | |
| +25 | 51202 | C Cameron | Hearts | 0.50 | |
| +43 | 51203 | D Beckett | Hibernian | 3.00 | |
| 0 | 51301 | K Wright | Hibernian | 3.00 | |
| +18 | 51302 | D Jackson | Kilmarnock | 3.00 | |
| +19 | 51303 | P Wright | Leeds United | 3.50 | |
| +20 | 51501 | A Yeboah | Leeds United | 2.00 | |
| +2 | 51502 | I Rush | Leeds United | 2.50 | |
| +34 | 51504 | B Deane | Leeds United | 2.00 | |
| +26 | 51601 | S Claridge | Liverpool City | 2.00 | |
| +43 | 51602 | E Heskey | Liverpool City | 0.75 | |
| +18 | 51603 | M Robins | Liverpool City | 0.75 | |
| +53 | 51604 | M Marshall | Liverpool City | 8.00 | |
| +37 | 51701 | R Fowler | Liverpool | 5.00 | |
| +25 | 51702 | S Collinson | Liverpool | 8.00 | |
| +11 | 51801 | E Cantona | Manchester United | 5.50 | |
| +7 | 51802 | P Scholes | Manchester United | 4.50 | |
| +2 | 51803 | A Cole | Manchester United | 3.00 | |
| +25 | 51804 | O O Sokejaer | Middlesbrough | 2.50 | |
| +25 | 51905 | F Pennell | Middlesbrough | 2.50 | |
| +19 | 51906 | M Back | Middlesbrough | 2.50 | |

Full moon February 22

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 18 1997

Panorama alleges exchange knew copper price was being artificially inflated

LME accused over Hamanaka

BY JASON NISSE



David King: programme says he misled markets

DAVID KING, chief executive of the London Metals Exchange, was accused last night of misleading the copper markets over the massive positions built up by Yasuo Hamanaka that cost Sumitomo Corporation \$2.6 billion.

The LME, whose chairman, Lord Bagri, was ennobled in the New Year Honours List, knew months before the market crashed that Hamanaka was artificially inflating the price of copper. However, speaking on last night's BBC Panorama programme, "The Copper King", Mr King said the LME could not reveal what it knew because it would have been "a major distortion of the market".

Neal Wolkoff, executive vice-president of Nymex, the New York Mercantile Exchange, the US's largest copper market, accused Mr King of misleading the markets by saying, in public, that the high copper price was "due to good, sound, fundamental economics". These comments were made late in 1995 when the copper price touched \$3,000 a tonne. It collapsed in May and June 1996 to under \$2,000, and stood at \$2,278 yesterday.

"I think his statements could have been, and probably were, taken to be misleading," Mr Wolkoff said. "I think what he intended to do was to

assuage the concerns of the market. I think what he did was incorrect."

The Times has obtained copies of letters written by R. Patrick Thompson, president of Nymex, which bring into question the LME's standing in the US. The first, sent on November 29 to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission in Washington, describes the LME's operation as "a potential threat to orderly US markets". The second, sent on February 12, 1996 to Mr King, calls for an urgent meeting because "a regulatory issue of some sort may exist on the London Metals Exchange".

The pressure is mounting

on the LME, which said it was reopening its investigation into Credit Lyonnais Roux, the London-based trading arm of the French state bank, after learning of CLR's 20 per cent interest in Winchester Commodities, the small copper trader now being investigated by the Serious Fraud Office.

Panorama revealed that during 1992 and 1993 Charles Vincent, a founder of Winchester, travelled three times to Tokyo, each time taking \$30,000 in cash. This was given to Winchester's Tokyo representative, Shinsuke Nishi, and booked as "advanced bonuses paid to Nishi". Yesterday, Japanese prosecutors

alleged that Hamanaka received ¥15 million (\$120,000) in cash from Winchester. His 1993 salary was ¥16.8 million. Winchester and Hamanaka struck a deal called RADR on June 24, 1993, which involved Sumitomo buying copper futures at prices that appeared substantially biased against the Japanese group. The BBC asked Professor Desmond Fitzgerald of Equitable House Group to analyse the deals. He concluded that Winchester made between \$30 million and \$38 million on RADR.

Neither Winchester nor the LME was prepared to comment last night on the Panorama programme.



Lord Bagri: LME chairman

Copper trader takes the blame



Hamanaka: guilty

YASUO HAMANAKA, the former copper trader, told a court in Tokyo yesterday that he alone was responsible for unauthorised copper deals that resulted in massive losses for his employer, Sumitomo Corporation (Robert Whyman writes). The man once known as "Mr Copper" pleaded guilty to forging documents and fraud in a financial scandal that caused a \$2.6 billion loss for Sumitomo.

Dressed in a blue suit, open-necked shirt and green plastic sandals, Hamanaka, 49, showed no emotion as the

prosecution in the Tokyo District Court read out the charges alleging that he swindled a total of \$771 million through Sumitomo's Hong Kong subsidiary on the false pretext of purchasing copper warrants. The money was then used to conceal losses incurred in unauthorised copper trades, it alleged.

Hamanaka admitted falsifying four letters to open accounts. On the fraud charge, he admitted making an improper payment to Morgan Guaranty of New York after losing money on options.

According to the prosecution, Hamanaka received a "gratitude payment" of 15 million yen (£75,000) from Winchester Commodities between the autumn of 1992 and the spring of 1993. He used Winchester's Tokyo office as a broker for some of Sumitomo's transactions on the London Metal Exchange and spent the money received on overseas travel, golf and night clubs, the prosecution said.

This is the first time it has been alleged that Hamanaka benefited personally. The trial continues.

BUSINESS TODAY

| STOCK MARKET | | |
|----------------|----------|----------|
| FTSE 100 | 4257.8 | (-3.2) |
| Yield | 3.60% | |
| FTSE All share | 2115.17 | (-0.95) |
| Nikkei | 18752.85 | (+28.65) |
| New York | | |
| Dow Jones | Closed | |
| S&P Composite | Closed | |

| US RATE | | |
|---------------|--------|----------|
| Federal Funds | Closed | (5.50%) |
| Long Bond | Closed | (107.50) |
| Yield | | (6.55%) |

| LONDON MONEY | | |
|-------------------|-------|---------|
| 3-month Treasury | 8.5% | (8.5%) |
| 6-month Treasury | 8.5% | (8.5%) |
| 12-month Treasury | 8.5% | (8.5%) |
| Libor 3-month | 11.5% | (11.5%) |

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Demerged Centrica falls while BG starts higher

NEWLY demerged Centrica fell sharply at the start of official trading yesterday, with the price tumbling 10.4p to 65.4p, or 15.5 per cent. Those losses could be extended today when investors on Wall Street return from their extended weekend break.

Brokers in London were last night warning that, with the absence of an American Depository Receipt facility in Centrica, the Americans are likely to turn sellers of the stock. Wall Street was closed yesterday for President's Day.

As it was, a total of 54.5 million Centrica shares had changed hands by the close of business. This, combined with the 19.76 million shares traded in BG, meant that the two companies accounted for 10.2 per cent of total stock market turnover of 726.1 million shares.

By contrast BG, the exploration and distribution arm, which includes troubled Transco, firmed 2.1p to 174.1p.

Merrill Lynch, the broker, is telling clients that the real value of Centrica, which includes the retail arm of British Gas, the ill-fated take-or-pay gas supply contracts and the Morecambe Bay gasfield, is around 40p a share. It says optimistic assumptions are being made about the take-or-pay contracts, which have cost British Gas hundreds of millions of pounds. At the same time, its true worth in the case of a bid is not as high as some speculators would wish.

Centrica started trading on the grey market earlier this month at 60p and rose steadily, but its reluctance to pay dividends has caused many small private shareholders to sell. BG opened at 185p after dipping to 134p initially.

Elsewhere, equities made heavy weather of it in the absence of a lead from Wall Street, which had dipped below 7,000 on Friday. After falling almost 22 points from last Friday's closing high, the FT-SE 100 index clawed back most of its losses to close just 3.2 down at 4,337.8.

Railtrack was 10.1p better at 393.4p as some brokers took the view that recent selling, which has seen the price come back from a peak of 413.1p, had been overdone.

BT ended the session 5.1p better at 441p, amid City whispers that it is pressing the Government to allow it to buy the outstanding 40 per cent in



James Heilig, left, and Norman McLeod, finance director of Low & Bonar, up 26.1p on higher profits and payout

Celnet from Securitor. The Government blocked the move a couple of years ago, but may now give the go-ahead in the face of increased competition from the likes of Vodafone, down 4p at 233p, Orange, 3p easier at 215p, and Cable and Wireless, 10p off at 501p.

Brokers estimate that Securitor's stake in Celnet

impressive profit increase. Brokers picked up on upbeat comments made to the Dutch press over the weekend which sent the price of the N/V stock sharply higher in Amsterdam.

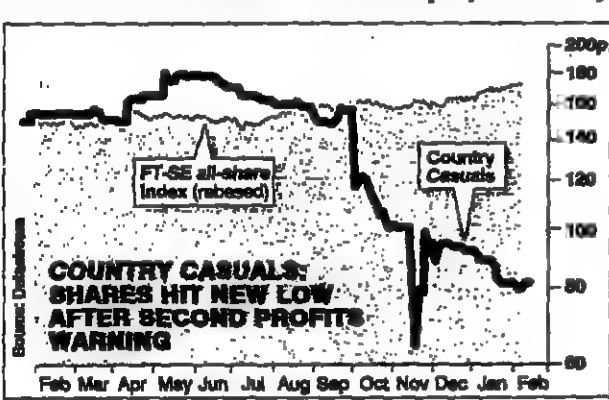
WPP Group, the advertising agency headed by Martin Sorrell, continues to go from strength to strength ahead of tomorrow's figures. These are expected to make positive reading with Panmure Gordon, the broker, rating the shares a "buy". The rise was also fuelled by talk of a share buyback.

could be worth up to £4 billion — not bad for a company that carries a stock market price tag of less than £2 billion. Securitor finished 8p dearer at 311.1p with 3.25 million shares traded.

Unilever was the best performing share among the top 100 companies, climbing 6p to £16.04, or 4.36 per cent, on further reflection of last week's

amid growing concerns about rising costs hitting profits in the second half.

Capital Corporation, the casino operator, jumped 15.1p to 186.1p as London Clubs, emerged as a potential suitor with an offer worth £181 million. The terms of 47 new London shares for every 100 Capital values the latter at around 181p. Speculators say



Ladbrokes, 2p firmer at 237p, may consider a counter-bid. London finished 6.1p lower at 378.1p.

A second profits warning in the space of less than three months left Country Casuals 6.1p down at 74p. In December it said profits would not be less than £1 million for the year. Now the group says the final outcome would not be less than £100,000. Brokers were not impressed.

Premium Underwriting rose 18p to 175p on news of an agreed £35 million bid from rival Wellington Underwriting, down 8p at 125.1p.

William Holdings touched 294.1p before finishing just 1.1p shy at 293p as brokers continue to ponder last week's £1.3 billion bid for Chubb Security, 3p off at 421.1p. Some brokers were worried about earnings dilution. The subsequent fall in its share price also sealed its fate as a constituent of the top 100 companies. It has been kicked out to make way for the BG and Centrica.

Full-year figures from Low & Bonar lived up to expectations and the shares responded with a jump of 26.1p to 424.1p. Pre-tax profits at the packaging group headed by James Heilig, chief executive, were up 3 per cent at £54 million and shareholders were rewarded with an 11 per cent increase in the final payout to 10.7p. In the past few months the price has slumped from a peak of 574p to a low of 389p after problems at its silage wrap and North American packaging business.

Flying Flowers, which unveiled some impressive profit numbers last week, firmed a further 2.1p to 222.1p. The price was unmoved by the news that Tim Dunningham, a director, has sold 28,000 shares at 218p.

GILT-EDGED: Weaker German bonds and the closure of the US Treasury bond market for a national holiday meant a dull session in London. Prices lost ground in thin trading, with institutional investors reluctant to open fresh positions.

The March series of the long gilt closed 2.1p lower at £113.1, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 was 2.1p lower at £107.1, while Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was £10 down at £100.1.

NEW YORK: US markets were closed for the President's Day holiday.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday): Closed

Dow Jones 6,950.50 (+10.50)

S&P Composite 1,134.42 (+1.33)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 18,795.65 (+38.65)

Hong Kong: Hang Seng 13,144.82 (+31.38)

Amsterdam: EOE Index 731.99 (+12.58)

Sydney: All Ordinaries 2,962.21 (+10.08)

Frankfurt: DAX 3,328.57 (+15.61)

Singapore: Straits Times 2,229.10 (+1.86)

Brussels: CAC-40 1,190.36 (+1.38)

Paris: CAC-40 1,190.36 (+1.38)

Zurich: SMI 2,913.10 (+6.53)

London: FT 30 2,865.5 (-12.4)

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TEMPUS

Grey day for Centrica

IF MARKETS are often imperfect, grey markets are seriously flawed. Unofficial dealings in Centrica shares prior to the demerger created a speculative bubble which burst on the first day of public trading. Income funds prevented from holding shares that do not pay a dividend were obvious sellers of the financially challenged gas marketing company. Sure enough, on the first day of dealings they rushed to the door, causing the price to fall 10.4p to 65.4p. More selling is expected today as American investors in British Gas unload stock in a company without a US quote.

Takeover speculation was behind the grey market buying, but hopes that a bidder will unlock hidden value look optimistic. Aside from the take-or-pay contract liabilities, Centrica has other potential poison pills. Often

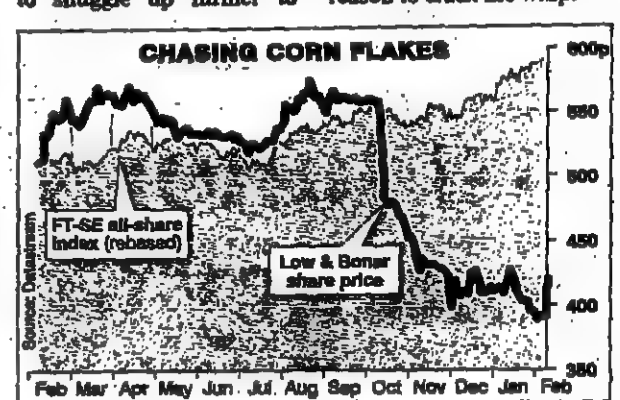
Low & Bonar

GAZING at a back of a cereal packet in the morning seems to crush the last dregs of surplus margin from its suppliers. When Kellogg itself is under pressure from the supermarkets, it would be unlikely to spare its suppliers from the pain.

Low & Bonar may be keen to struggle on further to

of suppliers, which Low & Bonar is more likely to be an attempt to crush the last dregs of surplus margin from its suppliers. When Kellogg itself is under pressure from the supermarkets, it would be unlikely to spare its suppliers from the pain.

Elsewhere, Low & Bonar is losing margin but the bad news was out of the way in its November profits warning, and it seems that there are to be no more nasty surprises. Kellogg is back on its feet and the company seems to have written off its silagewrap division. With packaging now accounting for 51 per cent of profits, Low & Bonar wants to extend its influence to the Continent.



Allied Carpets

AS multiple retailers grow, the corner shop is sold. However, against the odds, most carpets sold in this country still come from small, local shops rather than national chain stores.

Lord Harris's Carpetright and the recently floated Allied Carpets are confident that change is on the way. The only major carpet multiple in Britain each has roughly 14 per cent of the market and both see plenty of room for expansion. This is bad news for independents, but an interesting situation for investors.

Given the ambitions of the two chains, it will not be long before they compete head-to-head and investors need to look at the winners. So far Allied has been making all the running, its shares were heavily discounted when it joined the stock market but they have since climbed and are now trading on a prospective p/e ratio of 22 times

compared with Carpetright's 21 times. The rating is hard to justify, given that Allied Carpets admitted yesterday that its promotional activities have put its margins under heavy pressure. All in all, Carpetright looks a better bet.

Capital Corp

LONDON CLUBS has timed its bid well but it is still difficult to understand why anyone would pay £181 million for a couple of Mayfair casinos. On the expected profits of £9 million for the year just ended, the offer price is a ludicrous 32 times earnings. Of course, London Clubs has pitched its bid on the back of a poor set of results, already forecast by Capital Corporation as a recent profits warning. Crocodards, had rotten luck with some wealthy customers walking out the door with a lot more money than they took in.

All casinos suffer swings and roundabouts but over the winnings should approach an average of 18-20 per cent of money staked. The real concern for upmarket casinos is whether the really flush punters come in the door at all. For London Clubs the attraction of Capital is Crocodards; taking over that establishment would give it about half of the market in posh London casinos and therefore, more chance of capturing a bigger share of the cash that drips off rich gamblers.

Were Capital's profits to reach £12 million in the current year, the exit multiple would still be 22 times, a handsome 40 per cent premium to the market. This hard to see why such volatile profits deserve a premium rating but London Clubs is paying for the scarcity value of Crocodards. Investors might have preferred a less glamorous, cheaper, and less risky investment in mass-market entertainment.

EDITED BY CARL MORTHEIMER

COMMODITIES

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FOREIGN EXCHANGE

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Italian Govt Bond (BTP): 113.05 113.12 113.05 113.05 113.05

Japanese Govt Bond (JGB): 113.05 113.12 113.05 113.05 113.05

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Three Mth Eurodollar: 11

□ Huge fines the only answer to train failure □ Labour could be more friendly to bidders □ Trouble at the petrol pump

The excuse now waiting...

□ COMMUTERS from leafy suburbs in south London and as far out as Hampshire have noticed a sharp deterioration in their rail journeys to work. Clapped-out stock, trains shorter than usual with standing room only, more frequent cancellations — and now we know why.

The admission by Stagecoach, the first successful bidder for a British Rail franchise, that it has made a pig's ear of running South West Trains is the most humiliating setback yet for rail privatisation.

It is more humiliating than the cheap sales of public assets such as Portersmouth and Eversholt that turned out to be worth so much more to their management a few months later. Even worse than the grotesque rises in the stock market worth of train operators after franchise deals that guarantee profits. Worse than all those new millionaires created by the coachful, or seeing Railtrack shares, the only bit sold direct to private investors and City institutions, now worth twice what the Government got last summer.

All the above has been excused as the inevitable consequence of a difficult privatisation that turned out to be an unexpected success. We are even braced for the process to be repeated with the London Underground.

The management of Eversholt and Portersmouth, the leasing

companies, and their City backers won in the first round of bidding because no one else was prepared to pay more. Once the companies' true value had been established, the businesses were sold for a 55 per cent gain and some managers started looking for their own football teams.

Their willingness to take risks made their fortunes. Yet the excuse no longer washes if there is no improvement in the quality of service to the public. The reason for selling British Rail was to ensure entrepreneurial firms such as Stagecoach used their skills to make people's journeys more comfortable. If not actually cheaper. On some routes improvement has arrived, on others it is still in the sidings.

It is now down to the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising (OPRAF), one of Rail's two regulators, to fine Stagecoach for the failings of South West Trains. The fines should be huge; this is the corollary to all those windfall gains. If you are brought in to make improvements, you deserve no profits in the absence of them — that is only logical.

But what is this? The fines may be levied in secret. No one yet knows how much they could be, and this may not emerge until the OPRAF annual report, but tens of thousands of pounds is the general impression. Stagecoach, with a stock market capitalisation of £1.7 billion, was blithely confident last night that any sum would be "not material" to its fortunes.

This is clearly not on. Commuters waiting this morning to be shoehorned, late, into antediluvian rolling stock should have confidence that their misery is matched by real financial damage to the rail company.

Takeover climate still temperate

□ THE Gulf Canada bid for Clyde Petroleum will close today. Most other takeover bids are well into the end game, except for the two fresh outbreaks last week, Chubb and Whessoe, and Capital Corporation yesterday. Aside from that, on the mergers and acquisitions front that's about all, folks. There are the odd

PENNINGTON



rumours of a mega-bid, and the usual candidates are dusted off. But anyone who gambled big time on the rumours is regretting it.

The obvious reason is the impending general election. The 60-day bid timetable means that a takeover launched today might not squeeze under the wire but go to an incoming Labour administration — and Labour, if elected, can be expected to be inimical to takeovers.

Says who? Almost two years ago Gordon Brown suggested the bidder might have to show that the takeover served the public interest, an inversion of the current state of affairs where a bid can only be blocked if seen to be a bad thing. Labour has

softened since. Last month Tony Blair appeared to contradict Mr Brown — hardly for the first time — and suggest that his Chancellor's earlier proposals might require the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to make "a judgment about the relative competence of two sets of managers. This is very difficult for a public body to do."

True, even if any ruling on individual bids must contain an element of subjectivity. The public interest requirement is dead, along with any plans to merge the MMC with the Office of Fair Trading. Two other factors suggest Labour might not be so dead set against takeovers, hostile or otherwise. A Blair government can be expected actively to favour deals that create national champions better able to resist competition from overseas, whatever the short-term effect on jobs.

The second factor is the normal weight of political inertia. A radical shake-up of competition policy is going to be a long way behind schools, crime, a windfall tax and other matters which Labour has said are its priorities if in office.

Corporate finance teams, once the election is over, may have a couple more good years ahead of them yet.

Competing cultures of complaint

□ MOST of us are willing to believe the worst about oil multinationals — a healthy prejudice. As a result, the UK petrol market has been referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission three times. It was also subjected to a special study by the Office of Fair Trading on alleged profiteering in the Gulf war.

Each time the industry's critics failed to make enough dirt stick to justify more than a watching brief by the competition authorities. Now the market has turned right round. The challenge from food retailers and over-capacity in refining has meant fierce competition, keeping prices down. But complaints have not abated.

Independent retailers say they are squeezed unfairly in the middle, victims of unfair behaviour that will carve up the

market and create monopoly by driving them out of business. The director-general of fair trading is not too worried. Competition seems perfect.

If the oil industry had a regulator, as the utilities have, he would have to worry a great deal. There would be regular outcries; Richard Branson would be all over the media, and action would be demanded. The same might happen if the OFT itself had executive powers, making it a general regulator instead of a conduit to the MMC.

Whatever the state of the market, someone is always losing and someone is always aggrieved. The lesson is that perfect competition in electricity, gas or telecoms will not create an era in which regulation fades away. The Ofcom will be as busy and as obnoxious as ever.

Top of the pops

□ THE person teenagers would most trust to advise on their finances is Chris Evans, the volatile but rich disc jockey, according to a survey from the unit trust people. They are least likely to trust their savings with the Chancellor, joint bottom with someone called Mystic Meg. Which proves that the current generation lack none of their predecessors' skills at providing silly answers to daft questions.

Institutions hold key to Clyde future

By CARL MORTIMER

A MYSTERY investor yesterday snapped up 4.4 million shares in Clyde Petroleum, the independent oil company whose future will be decided today after a hard-fought battle against the 120p-per-share bid from Gulf Canada Resources.

The single block of four million shares changed hands at the bid price of 120p and is thought to have gone into hands friendly to Clyde Petroleum. The investor amassed the remaining stake from market-makers, creating a holding of about 1 per cent.

The last-minute share deal could be important to Clyde. However, it may not be enough to secure its independence as yesterday the bid moved sharply in Gulf's favour when the Canadian bidder announced that it had secured control of 40.97 per cent of the UK explorer's stock. Gulf has received

acceptances for a further 1.46 per cent of Clyde, but these were not yet validated.

A small number of institutions are key to the outcome of the bid as private shareholders own only about 3 per cent of Clyde. Gulf scored an important gain when FIDM, the fund manager, sold its 14 per cent stake to Gulf but Schroders, a fund manager thought to be supportive of Clyde, has yet to declare its intentions. Other big investors include Norwich Union, Whittington Investments and Capital Group, the American fund manager.

Some analysts query the wisdom of Schroders turning down the 120p bid when the crude oil price has been slipping. "I think they will be very brave to stick with it," one broker said. The price of the Brent crude oil contract has fallen from above \$24 at the start of January to less than \$21 and the futures market suggests the slide will continue with analysts predicting a surge in supply amid expectations of Opec overproduction.

Winning a National Training Award means prestige, better recruits, publicity and a certain amount of quiet satisfaction.



Care firm must unpick lease deal

By ROBERT DUNCAN

ASSOCIATED Nursing Services, the nursing home company, has been forced to unravel sale and leaseback arrangements and restate its accounts for the past two years after a landmark ruling by the Financial Reporting Review Panel.

Associated's leaseback agreement was an industry standard supplied by Nursing Home Properties (NHP). Daniel Francis, NHP finance director, said: "The Review Panel's decision is not well-informed and will have a knock-on effect right across every company that has a sale and leaseback agreement."

The dispute centred on whether associated companies are subsidiaries. The NHP agreement fell foul of rules on off balance sheet finance.

Frederick Brown, Associated's finance director, said: "We are being told that assets which were on the Nursing Home Properties balance sheet now have to be on our balance sheet."

Ex-Penguin chief tells of dismay

By ERIC REGULY

PETER MAYER, the former chief executive of Penguin, the book publisher, said yesterday that he was shocked and dismayed by the disclosure that improper accounting had left a £100 million hole in the accounts.

In his first comments since the scandal emerged last Thursday, Mr Mayer, who had been travelling in Asia for the past six weeks, said that he would co-operate fully with Pearson's investigation into the matter.

The company has hired Price Waterhouse, the accounting firm, and the New York law office of Cravath, Swaine & Moore to determine how a junior bookkeeper in Penguin's accounts office in New Jersey was able to extend unauthorised discounts to retailers since 1991 in exchange for prompt payments. Mr Mayer said: "I had no suspicion that anything was wrong in the accounts department."

Wellington £34.9m bid impresses Premium

WELLINGTON Underwriting, the specialist Lloyd's insurer, has beaten off an unnamed bidder to make a £34.9 million recommended offer for Premium Underwriting (Gavin Lumsden writes).

Julian Avery, group managing director, said the offer was a cost-effective way of raising new capital and gave Wellington more than £600 million of capacity. It also maintains £82 million of loans between PU and Premium Trust and Coriander in the Isle of Man.

The offer overvalues Premium by 37.2 per cent on Friday's closing price. This pushed down Wellington shares 8p to 125.5p but boosted Premium by 18p to 175p.

Wellington is offering 125 new shares for every 100 shares in Premium plus £25.20 in cash. Moore Govett is arranging a cash alternative. It has received an irrevocable undertaking from Codelouf, a shareholder with 27 per cent of the voting rights in Premium.

If you'd like to bask in the glory of winning a 1997 National Training Award, contact your local TEC/LEC in England and Scotland, the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQs) in Wales and the Training and Employment Agency in Northern Ireland. You'll find their numbers in your local telephone directory right next to your competitors.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Demerged Centrica falls while BG starts higher

NEWLY demerged Centrica fell sharply at the start of official trading yesterday, with the price tumbling 10 1/2p to 65 1/2p, or 13.5 per cent. Those losses could be extended today when investors on Wall Street return from their extended weekend break.

Brokers in London were last night warning that, with the absence of an American Depository Receipt facility in Centrica, the Americans are likely to turn sellers of the stock. Wall Street was closed yesterday for President's Day.

As it was, a total of 54.5 million Centrica shares had changed hands by the close of business. This, combined with the 19.76 million shares traded in BG, meant that the two companies accounted for 10.2 per cent of total stock market turnover of 726.1 million shares.

By contrast BG, the exploration and distribution arm, which includes troubled TransCo, firmed 2 1/2p to 174 1/2p.

Merrill Lynch, the broker, is telling clients that the real value of Centrica, which includes the retail arm of British Gas, the ill-fated take-over of the Morecambe Bay gasfield, is around 40p a share. It says optimistic assumptions are being made about the take-over contracts, which have cost British Gas hundreds of millions of pounds. At the same time, its true worth in the case of a bid is not as high as some speculators would wish.

Centrica started trading on the grey market earlier this month at 60p and rose steadily, but its reluctance to pay dividends has caused many small private shareholders to sell. BG opened at 185p after dipping to 184 1/2p.

Elsewhere, equities made heavy weather of it in the absence of a lead from Wall Street, which had dipped below 7,000 on Friday. After falling almost 22 points from last Friday's closing high, the FT-SE 100 index clawed back most of its losses to close just 3.2 down at 4,337.8.

Railtrack was 10 1/2p better at 393 1/2p as some brokers took the view that recent selling, which has seen the price come back from a peak of 413 1/2p, has been overdone.

BT ended the session 5 1/2p better at 441p amid City whispers that it is pressuring the Government to allow it to buy the outstanding 40 per cent in



James Heilig, left, and Norman McLeod, finance director, of Low & Bonar, up 20 1/2p on higher profits and payout

Cellnet from Securicor. The Government blocked the move a couple of years ago, but may now give the go-ahead in the face of increased competition from the likes of Vodafone, down 4p at 283p.

Orange, 3p easier at 215p, and Cable and Wireless, 10p off at 510 1/2p.

Brokers estimate that Securicor's stake in Cellnet WPP Group, the advertising agency headed by Martin Sorrell, continues to go from strength to strength ahead of tomorrow's figures. These are expected to make positive reading with Panmure Gordon, the broker, rating the shares a "buy". The rise was also fuelled by talk of a share buyback.

could be worth up to 64 billion not bad for a company that carries a stock market price tag of less than £2 billion. Securicor finished 8p dearer at 311 1/2p with 3.25 million shares traded.

Unilever was the best performing share among the top 100 companies, climbing 6p to 161.04p, or 4.36 per cent, on further reflection of last week's

impressive profit increase. Brokers picked up on upbeat comments made to the Dutch press over the weekend which sent the price of the N/V stock sharply higher in Amsterdam.

Lloyds TSB rose 15p to 518 1/2p as brokers continued to scrutinise last Friday's sharp jump in full-year pre-tax profits. Barclays, reporting later today, fell 16p to £11.99.

Full-year figures from Low & Bonar lived up to expectations and the shares responded with a jump of 26 1/2p to 424 1/2p. Pre-tax profits at the packaging group headed by James Heilig, chief executive, were up 3 per cent at £54 million and shareholders were rewarded with an 11 per cent increase in the final payout to 10.7p. In the past few months the price has slumped from a peak of 54p to the level of 38p after problems at the silage wrap and North American packaging business.

Flying Colours, which unveiled some impressive profit numbers last week, firmed a further 2 1/2p to 222 1/2p. The price was unmoved by the news that Tim Dunningham, a director, has sold 285,000 shares at 218p.

GLT-EDGED: Weaker German bonds and the closure of the US Treasury bond market for a national holiday meant a dull session in London. Prices lost ground in this trading, with institutional investors reluctant to open fresh positions.

The March series of the long gilt closed 2 1/2p lower at £113 1/2p, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 was 2 1/2p lower at £107 1/2p, while Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 2 1/2p down at £100 1/2p.

NEW YORK: US markets were closed for the President's Day holiday.

Ladbroke, 2p firmer at 237p, may consider a counter-bid. Lend Lease finished 6 1/2p lower at 378 1/2p.

A second profits warning in the space of less than three months left Country Casuals 6 1/2p down at 74p. In December it said profits would not be less than £1 million for the year. Now the group says the final outcome would not be less than £100,000. Brokers were not impressed.

Premium Underwriting rose 18p to 175p on news of an agreed £35 million bid from rival Wellington Underwriting, down 8p at 125 1/2p.

Williams Holdings touched 294 1/2p before finishing just 1 1/2p shy at 293p as brokers continue to ponder last week's £1.3 billion bid for Club Security, 5p off at 421 1/2p.

Somero's shares were worried about earnings dilution. The subsequent fall in its share price also sealed its fate as a constituent of the top 100 companies. It has been kicked out to make way for the BG and Centrica.

Full-year figures from Low & Bonar lived up to expectations and the shares responded with a jump of 26 1/2p to 424 1/2p. Pre-tax profits at the packaging group headed by James Heilig, chief executive, were up 3 per cent at £54 million and shareholders were rewarded with an 11 per cent increase in the final payout to 10.7p.

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MAJOR INDEX

New York (midday): Closed

S&P Composite

Tokyo

Nikkei Average

Hong Kong

Hang Seng

Amsterdam

EEX Index

Sydney

Frankfurt

DAX

Singapore

Straits

Brussels

General

Paris

CAC-40

Zurich

SEA Gen

London

FT 100

FTSE Mid 250

FTSE 250

FTSE Europe 100

FT All-Share

FT Non Financials

FT Real Estate

FT Govt Secs

Bergins

SEAG Volume

US\$

German Mark

Exchange Index

Bank of England official close

ELEX

ESDR

RPI

NPI

RECENT ISSUES

CAB Publishing

Calidore Group

Calidore Warrants

Centrica (75%)

GB Railways

John Lewis

Pretulac

Pretulac Warrants

Tea Plantations Inv

Tea Plantations Ws

Technipol

Zinc Mining

Finellon N.p. (20%)

RISER

Brilliant

Glowings

Matthew Clark

Wendley

Gearhouse Gp

Lloyds TSB

Source

Rank Group

GLS

Westpac

Chrysalis

Enterprise

Granada

Bunnet (HP)

FALLS

Partly

Lewdard

Shield Day

Johnson Mith

Whitmore R

API

AEA Tech

Cable Wireless

BAA

Scott & New

Plasnet

Huntly Tech

Delta

Brown (H)

Legal & Gen

Preston

Oxford Inst

Clyde Blowers

Closing Prices Page 33

TEMPUS

Grey day for Centrica

IF MARKETS are often imperfect, grey markets are seriously flawed. Unofficial dealings in Centrica shares prior to the demerger created a speculative bubble which burst on the first day of public trading. Income funds prevented from holding shares that do not pay a dividend were obvious sellers of the financially challenged gas marketing company. Sure enough, on the first day of dealings they rushed to the door, causing the price to fall 10 1/2p to 65 1/2p. More selling is expected today as American investors in British Gas unload stock in a company without a US quote.

Takeover speculation was behind the grey market buying, but hopes that a bidder will unlock hidden value look optimistic. Aside from the take-over contract liabilities, Centrica has other potential poison pills. Often

it is the loss to Centrica, after a takeover, of the British Gas name, which still carries some goodwill; the company kept 80 per cent of its domestic customers in the recent free market trial. Potentially more important is the risk of losing long-term industrial customers. These contracts — thought to be struck at a high 19p per therm — account for 10 per cent of volume and could be lost on a change of control.

Ultimately, Centrica is a creature of the gas price, because of its exposure to expensive supply contracts. The spot price is now down to 12p per therm, but longer-term gas prices will depend on trends in Europe as the interconnector smoothes out the differential between Britain and the Continent. With ample supplies of Russian gas arriving from the East, the price trend must be down. Centrica shares could fall to less than 60p.

Low & Bonar

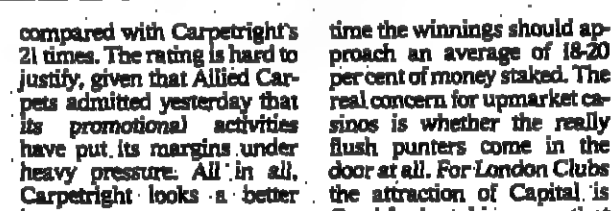
GAZING at a back of a cereal packet in the morning seems to have excited Jim Heilig, Low & Bonar's chief executive. Kellogg has been kind to Low & Bonar, allowing it good margins to supply the food company with cereal boxes and it would like to extend the relationship.

Elsewhere, Low & Bonar is losing margin but the bad news was out of the way in its November profits warning, and it seems that there are to be no more nasty surprises. Plastics is back on its feet and the company seems to have written off its silagewrap division. With packaging now accounting for 51 per cent of profits, Low & Bonar wants to extend its influence to the Continent. But it may be a bit too far. Kellogg's worldwide review

of suppliers, which Low & Bonar sees as an opportunity, is more likely to be an attempt to crush the last flake of surplus margin from its suppliers. When Kellogg itself is under pressure from the supermarkets, it would be unlikely to spare its suppliers from the pain.

Low & Bonar may be keen to smuggle up further to Kellogg but next year the cereal giant will have the chance to inject a bit of variety into its British suppliers for the first time since it sold off its division four years ago.

In an industry already rife with competition, Low & Bonar's largest customer would appear to have every reason to crack the whip.



Allied Carpets

AS multiple retailers grow, the corner shop is sold. However, against the odds, most carpets sold in this country still come from small, local shops rather than national chain stores.

Lord Harris's Carpetright and the recently floated Allied Carpets are confident that change is on the way. The only major carpet multiple in Britain each has roughly 14 per cent of the market and both see plenty of room for expansion. This is bad news for independents, but an interesting situation for investors.

Given the ambitions of the two chains, it will not be long before they compete head-to-head and investors need to back the winner. So far, Allied has been making all the running. Its shares were heavily discounted when it joined the stock market but they have since climbed and are now trading on a prospective p/e ratio of 22 times

compared with Carpetright's 21 times. The rating is hard to justify, given that Allied Carpets admitted yesterday that its promotional activities have put its margins under heavy pressure. All in all, Carpetright looks a better bet.

Capital Corp

LONDON CLUBS has timed its bid well but it is still difficult to understand why anyone would pay £181 million for a couple of Mayfair casinos. On the expected profits of £9 million for the year just ended, the offer price is a ludicrous 32 times earnings. Of course, London Clubs has pitched its bid on the back of a poor set of results, already forecast by Capital Corporation in a recent profits warning. Crocodards had rotten luck with some wealthy customers walking out the door with a lot more money than they took in.

All casinos suffer swings and roundabouts but over

time the winnings should approach an average of 18-20 per cent of money staked. The real concern for unmarketed casinos is whether the really flush punters come in the door at all. For London Clubs the attraction of Capital is Crocodards; taking over that establishment would give it about half of the market in posh London casinos and therefore, more chance of capturing a bigger share of the cash that drips off rich gamblers.

Were Capital's profits to reach £12 million in the current year, the exit multiple would still be 22 times, a handsome 40 per cent premium to the market. It is hard to see why such volatile profits deserve a premium rating but London Clubs is paying for the scarcity value of Crocodards. Investors might have preferred a less glamorous, cheaper and less risky investment in mass-market entertainment.

EDITED BY CARL MORTIMER

COMMODITIES

ICE-LOX (London 6.00pm)

CLIQUE OILS (6.00pm)

BRENT Physical

Brent 15 day (API)

Brent 15 day (API)

WTI Intermediate (API)

WTI Intermediate (API)

WTI Intermediate (API)

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LONDON FINANCIAL

Long Gil

Previous open interest: 2000

German Govt Bond (Bond)

Previous open interest: 2000

Italian Govt Bond (BTP)

Previous open interest: 1000

Japanese Govt Bond (JGB)

Previous open interest: 1000

Three Mth Sterling

Previous open interest: 1000

Three Mth Eurodollar

Previous open interest: 1000

Three Mth Euroyen

Previous open interest: 1000

Three Mth Eurodollar

Previous open interest: 1000

Three Mth Euroyen

Previous open interest: 1000

Three Mth Eurodollar

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LONDON FINANCIAL

Argentina peso

Brazil real

Canada dollar

Denmark krone

France franc

Germany mark

Hong Kong dollar

Ireland pound

Italy lira

Japan yen

New Zealand dollar

Norway kroner

Portugal escudo

Spain peseta

Sweden krona

Switzerland franc

Taiwan dollar

UK sterling

US dollar

Yemen rial

Zimbabwe dollar

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Careful Auntie playing safe

THE BBC is clearly getting extremely careful about what it sends out across the airwaves. Yesterday the corporation conducted a hush-hush screening of its BBC Panorama programme *The Copper Ring*, which made accusations about the conduct of the fugitive Ashley Levitt and Charlie Vincent, of Winchester Commodities. In the room next door at Broadcasting House a seminar was being held entitled "Law for Broadcasters".

Movie thriller

STEPHEN WILSON, a US district court judge, fell asleep while watching the smash-hit movie *Jerry Maguire*, forcing him to postpone a decision on whether or not to dismiss the \$110 million lawsuit over product placement in the Tom Cruise film, which is opening in England this week.

Wilson, who admits to dozing off, said he needs to finish watching the film before ruling whether Reebok International is entitled to damages because the film's producers renege on a deal to show a Reebok commercial starring Cuba Gooding Jr (nominated for an Oscar for the role) as the fictional football player Rod Tidwell during the movie's closing credits. Trial is set for May 6. TriStar Pictures, the production company, has applied to dismiss the legal action as being without merit.



ON THE day that London Clubs, the casino group, bid for its rival Capital Corporation the Dutch appear to have perfected breeding of the black tulip. Its name: "blackjack".

Goldman scraps

A PARK-IN protest flared up yesterday at the top rank beside the Fleet Street offices of Goldman Sachs as the American-owned merchant bank became embroiled in a cabbies' scrap. The drivers are on the Computer Cab circuit, which is proposing to join the Alternative Investment Market. Only 500 or so of ComCab's 2,000 drivers have been fitted with a satellite tracking system, causing resentment among other drivers, who claim that the best jobs, including work with Goldmans, is handed out via the system.

Crusty aussies

PEPSICO Restaurants found itself with rather more publicity than it had bargained for. Down Under after its new Pizza Hut commercial advising people to "get stuffed" was branded as offensive. Local politicians called for the billboard poster, which was put up outside Sydney Airport to promote Pizza Hut's new cheese stuffed crust pizza, to be immediately pulled down. They said that the wording — "Welcome to Australia. Now you can get stuffed." — sent out the wrong kind of message to visitors. However, an unrepentant PepsiCo marketing director said the poster was staying. He said: "My kids think it's hilarious. Here in Australia we have a very rich language and a strong sense of the vernacular. That's who we are as a country; we are a little bit out there."

COLLECTIONS £1M A DAY GOVERNMENT



Mail-shot: Sir Michael Heron, the chairman of the Post Office, and John Roberts, chief executive, posting a payment to the Treasury

What the future may deliver for Britain's Post Office

Philip Bassett examines the post-election options for a threatened business

New measures were put forward yesterday aimed at ensuring the post-election future of a British business beleaguered by politics: the Post Office.

The Post Office is a success story. Twenty years of profits, all subsidised by the taxpayer; 18 billion letters of mail a year; high standards of service and widespread public approval. But senior Post Office managers insist that this exemplary record is under threat on two fronts.

The first is from technology as people increasingly turn to alternative forms of communication, the phone, fax, e-mail. The second is from overseas competitors. The Post Office's position as the pre-eminent postal service in Europe has slipped, with the networks of The Netherlands and Irish Republic now scoring higher on service delivery than the UK.

The Post Office managers put the blame squarely on government rules that restrict its ability to compete on both fronts.

Although no mention of the idea was made at the time of the last election, the Government attempted to address the issue by way of its traditional route of privatisation. But in the face of extensive public opposition and a revolt among its own backbenchers, ministers had to abandon the move.

John Major, the Prime Minister, has indicated the Conservatives' readiness to return to the issue after the election. If the Conservative Party is returned, and if it has a sufficient majority, Post Office managers expect it to proceed with a new privatisation move.

For Labour, beating off the threat of privatisation was vital, but the party has not moved much beyond a generalised declaration that if elected to government it will give the Post Office the greater commercial freedom it has long sought.

As Mexican stand-offs go, this is politically sustainable, especially if the Post Office keeps turning in profits and

ploughing funds into the Treasury's coffers through its negative external financing limit (EFL): that is, instead of being a net beneficiary of government money, like, say, health or education, the Post Office is a net contributor.

But Post Office managers insist the threats of changing technology and growing competition mean that it is increasingly operationally unsustainable. One way or another, they are looking to the election to break the political logjam.

At the London headquarters of the Industrial Society yesterday, a way of moving the logs was offered — curiously enough by a union that only a few months ago was locked into a series of potentially damaging strikes against the Post Office. Even more curiously perhaps, the Post Office broadly welcomed the proposals from the leaders of the Communication Workers' Union (CWU) in a consultative document amusingly styled, in terms of typeface and design, on a government Green Paper.

John Roberts, the Post Office's chief executive, who only recently attacked the CWU's dinosaur tactics in last year's strikes, talked yesterday of common ground, agreement with the union and of welcoming its support. He said: "It's encouraging that the CWU in its 'green paper' on the future of the Post Office takes a constructive view of many of the current challenges."

Given the decline of union strength, many unions now have only a limited focus on how their members are dealt

with. Only a few, perhaps the CWU, the FDA grouping of senior civil servants, the Royal College of Nursing, Balpa and Equity, have an impact on what their members do in the organisations in which they work. Few people, for instance, either know or care what the TGWU, the transport workers' union, thinks about, say, heavy lorries.

Although Alan Johnson and Tony Young, the CWU's joint general secretaries, insisted yesterday that the document was non-party political, the determination of people such as Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, to privatise the Post Office if at all possible makes it clear that the real object of the union's move is a new Labour government.

The sometimes strained relations between new Labour and the unions rest partly on the fact that in spite of the Labour-union joint rhetoric of fairness not favours, many unions see the possible advent of a Labour government as a time to draw up their shopping lists — still not fully or even at all realising that the surefire way of not getting what they want from Tony Blair, the Labour leader, is such a list.

In terms of the unions and similar groups, Mr Blair is much more interested in what they can do for Britain under a Labour government, rather than what a Labour government can do for them.

In that light, the CWU will come forward before the election with new proposals on telecommunications, for instance, including pricing, and on

what relationship generally unions can have not with the Labour Party but with the different animal of a Labour government.

Yesterday's Post Office proposals from the union sketched out a blueprint for Labour in government on this issue: a method of keeping the Post Office in the public sector, but removing it from the straitjacket of the system of public finances that govern its cash contributions in precisely the same way as education or health cash use; a new measure of deficit for government activity; a specific limit on EFL payments; an RPI-X price cap on the Post Office's monopoly items; and a new independent regulator.

Labour needs the Post Office to carry on being successful, partly in terms of ideology as the only real business remaining in the nationalised sector and partly in terms of cashflow. A new Labour government as strapped for cash as the Conservatives would be unlikely to walk quickly away from the guaranteed cash tap that the Post Office provides.

Something like the CWU's proposals could be the way for Labour to expand the Post Office's market share and so profits, continuing the EFL money stream but allowing the Post Office to invest more for further profitability: a virtuous circle.

Conservative ministers insist that there is no scope in such ideas, and that such halfway-house ideas will not only give a still publicly owned Post Office grossly unfair advantage in the market place, but would blow a hole in the control of the public finances.

Either way, the Post Office, long mired in political argument, wants movement. As the Dutch postal service steps up its UK operations, and as E-mailing someone in California becomes as easy as calling someone in Clapham, Britain's postal system is waiting for a new operating framework — delivery courtesy of the coming election.



ANATOLE KALETSKY

Bulls should enjoy another good run

It has been a week of historic milestones for financial markets. On Wall Street last Thursday, the Dow Jones industrial average shot through 7,000 and the S&P composite simultaneously breached 800. In London, meanwhile, the pound hit DM2.77, just a whisker below its old ERM floor of DM2.7780. And yesterday the dollar rose for the first time in four years to DM1.70 — a level that would have been considered still absurdly cheap back in the 1980s, but which during the dark days of the dollar, when the US currency was languishing well below DM1.40, many market experts said would never be seen again.

On the other hand, the abrupt weakening of the European currencies, which is the mirror image of the strong dollar, will assure a decent economic recovery in the answer is yes. On January 10, when I last discussed the outlook for the world economy on this page, it seemed, at least to me, that 1997 might be a relatively dull year for financial markets. Sterling's upsurge already appeared to be exhausted, at least against the dollar. The New York and London stock markets seemed set for a long period of directionless trading within established ranges.

And even the steady hardening of the dollar against the mark, which was clearly bound to go much further, looked as though it might continue at a rather subdued pace.

Indeed, the most ambitious target I could bring myself to mention for the dollar/mark exchange rate was "at least DM1.70". It is now clear that many of these predictions were wrong on, at least, two counts. Events in 1997 are taking a much more dramatic turn than I had expected.

Let me begin with the market where my expectations have been most clearly confounded. In early January it seemed, to me at least, most likely that a long period of directionless trading would frustrate both the bulls and the bears.

I did, however, suggest

that a more dramatic, but less probable, alternative: another big gain of 20 per cent or so followed by an equally sharp fall. Now this boom-bust scenario seems much the more likely. The main reason is the feedback relationship between share prices, currencies and world economic growth.

On one hand, the dollar's parabolic trajectory reflects an upsurge of international confidence in the US economy and in the American model of corporate governance. This will contribute to further gains in Wall Street and in corporate equities generally — and such gains will add, in a virtuous circle, to the world's desire to hold more dollars.

On the other hand, the abrupt weakening of the European currencies, which is the mirror image of the strong dollar, will assure a decent economic recovery in Europe and make it easier for politicians to agree on a soft euro as the natural replacement for the mark. Thus the softening of the European currencies

and the consequent return of economic competitiveness to Europe will reinforce the general state of global economic confidence and give another push to the upwards trend in stock markets from the European side.

Where does all this leave Britain and sterling? Half-way between America and Europe, Britain could enjoy the best of both worlds.

The pound may rise a little further against the mark, but should fall quite a bit against the dollar. This would offer many British companies exactly what they want. London shares should, as usual, follow Wall Street, even if they do not do quite as well.

Sooner or later, no doubt, these benign financial trends will get out of hand and markets will fall back to earth with a thump. Indeed, a bullish stampede in the coming months could well be the final phase of the worldwide bull market that began in 1982. But before a bear market starts — and perhaps foreshadows the next recession — the bulls should enjoy another good run.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Good age balance in business should not be confined to management level

From Mr Richard Worsley, Sir, Graham Searjeant's comments on the prejudices against both older and younger people as board members ("Gilded youth can spice up that politically correct board", February 6) are as refreshing as his plea for some risk-taking and the abandonment of a rigid formula of recruitment in business.

He describes a self-defeating rigidity that leads to the Catch 22 absurdity of so many capable young people being denied opportunities because of their inexperience, while older people are being turned away because they are too experienced.

The Employers Forum on Age (EFA) exists to support

and guide employers who have recognised the business benefits of a mixed-age workforce. We would like to add two postscripts to your timely article:

First, the benefits of a good balance of age apply not just to boardrooms, but at all levels of employment;

Next month the EFA will be publishing guidance on how to recruit in order to achieve a mixed-age workforce. The report, *Getting the Balance Right in Recruitment*, will be available to both members and non-members.

Yours faithfully, RICHARD WORSLEY, Employers Forum on Age, Astral House, 1268 London Road, SW16.

Causes of negative equity and mortgage arrears

From the Deputy Director-General, Council of Mortgage Lenders

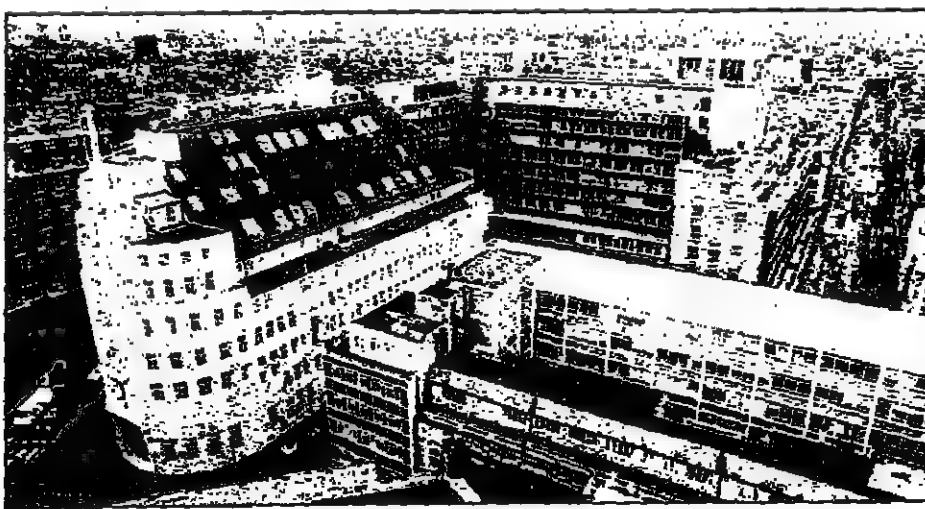
Sir, Pennington (January 30) rather cynically acknowledges the welcome fall in the number of possession cases reported by Michael Coogan, Director-General of the Council of Mortgage Lenders. The column correctly notes that rising prices are not producing rising possessions but the very opposite effect — which is what the CML and lenders have long argued.

However, the article does repeat yet another mishandled belief which is that those in negative equity are also those in arrears. Clearly there will

be some in this position but the primary causes of arrears are unemployment, financial mismanagement and relationship breakdown which can occur in any household, in any region, regardless of the equity in the property.

Negative equity and arrears are not mutually exclusive but neither is one necessarily a cause of the other. The majority of those in negative equity are not in arrears and continue, where they are able, to pay their mortgages.

Yours faithfully, PETER WILLIAMS, Deputy Director-General, Council of Mortgage Lenders, 3 Savile Row, W1.



Broadcasting House in central London, which will feature in the BBC's systems overhaul

in 42 countries. In Britain it has almost 10,000 employees, a figure expected to double by 2000.

The company was founded by Ross Perot, the plain-talking Texan whose political ambitions embraced the US Presidential campaigns of 1992 and 1996. He made himself a billionaire when he sold EDS in General Motors in 1984. EDS was spun-off from GM last year, giving it a market capitalisation of \$20 billion, and its shares are listed on the New York and London stock exchanges.

EDS is hardly a household name yet its services permeate society. It collects parking tickets for the Parking Committee of London and is

developing computer systems for the Inland Revenue's self-assessment system, just one of several Revenue contracts worth £1.6 billion. It provides services to the Metropolitan Police, London Underground, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and is building information systems for the Royal Navy, Rolls-Royce Aerospace hired EDS to upgrade its customer service, supply, engineering and manufacturing operations.

While outsourcing has become more popular, it is not new. "There is absolutely nothing different about outsourcing your information technology needs than outsourcing any other non-core activity like property manage-

ment or cleaning," EDS says. "It allows you to concentrate on what you do best."

The financial reasons are even more compelling. EDS and its rivals argue that, in most cases, they can provide a better service for less money because their employees live and breathe technology and know how to make the most efficient use of it. But the real attraction for a client is budget control. Information technology represents a huge variable cost in any large organisation. Computer or business system disasters, such as the introduction of new technology that takes months instead of weeks, can bleed a budget dry. Outsourcing transfers the risk to the IT supplier.

THE TIMES TUESDAY FEBRUARY 18 1997

Low & Bonar seeks to package Kellogg's cereal in Europe

By FRASER NELSON

LOW & BONAR, the plastics and packaging company that makes all of the cartons for Kellogg's cereal sold in the UK, is seeking to take over the cereal giant's packaging business across Europe.

The company, which bought Kellogg's two UK packaging plants five years ago, said that while the cereal giant was not directly seeking new bidders, it was conducting a general review of suppliers. Jim Heilig, chief

executive, said: "As far as Kellogg's is concerned, the whole world is up for tender at the moment. We've had a pretty good relationship with them over the past few years, and I'm sure they'd consider expanding it because they like what we do."

He said that he was optimistic about the company's chances of retaining its exclusive UK deal with Kellogg, which is coming up for review this year. While Low & Bonar can not lose the contract entirely, Kellogg has the option of

giving 20 per cent of the business to another company.

Mr Heilig's comments came as the group, whose shares lost a quarter of their value three months ago after a profits warning, returned flat for the year to November 30. Pre-tax profits were slightly down at £52.3 million (£52.5 million) on sales of £420 million (£431 million). Earnings were 36.6p (36p) per share.

The silagewrap division was the worst performer, with profits £3 million behind last year. Mr Heilig said that £2

million of the losses were because of price cuts in the face of competition and £1 million was lost through volume decline. He said that he did not expect the business to improve, but added that the company had no plans to sell the operation. "The margins are not nearly like what they used to be. We'll do our share — the business will grow, but it's not going to be hugely profitable," he said.

The plastics business increased profits 17 per cent to £10.2 million over the year.

The company said that the division had won a contract to supply an unnamed international petrol station chain with forecast plastics. The deal is expected to be worth £10 million over three years.

In spite of the flat results, the company lifted the total dividend from 13.2p to 15.7p, with a final 10.7p. This heartened the City, which had been expecting the worst after the profits warning. The shares rose 21½p to 419½p yesterday.

Tempus, page 28

TC Group wins care homes deal

TC Group, the nursing home operator that last month issued a surprise profit warning, has won a tender for 16 residential homes and three day centres for the elderly and those with learning disabilities and dementia from Bedfordshire County Council.

The deal, awarded after a competitive tender, means that TC will operate 26 homes and six day centres on behalf of local authorities. Altogether, the group operates 12,000 beds in 131 care homes. The homes being transferred will provide 500 beds and the group must spend up to £10 million on refurbishment and building.

Takeover trail

Hydro-Dynamic Products has identified two possible takeover targets to add to its printing supplies businesses for about £250,000. The company made a pre-tax profit of £426,000 in the six months to November 30 after flotation costs of £300,000. An interim dividend of 1.2p is due to be paid on April 4.

TBI deals

TBI, the property investment and development company, is acquiring properties in the London area from Hampton Trust for £19.4 million. They comprise land at the Percy Street Estate in central London: Gresham House, an office building in Watford; and a retail outlet at Broadway, Muswell Hill.

Allen builds

Allen, the construction and plant hire company, said its contracting business continued to see a good flow of orders, taking £21.9 million in the three months to December 31. Housing reservations were up 47 per cent.

Wickes move

Wickes, the UK do-it-yourself retailer, is to withdraw from its South African joint venture with Federated Blakie as part of its strategy to refocus its business in Britain.

BSM buys HQ

BSM, the driving school company, is spending £1.175 million to buy its head office in Wimbledon, south London.

GUS looks at property venture

By OUR CITY STAFF

GREAT Universal Stores and British Land, the property developer, confirmed that they were discussing a £1 billion joint venture to take over and run most of the property portfolio owned by the mail-order company.

The new company would take over high street retail and office space spread across Britain, a legacy of the days when GUS was Britain's largest retailer, allowing GUS to obtain funds from the properties while keeping an interest in their ownership.

The confirmation of the talks comes two months after British Land announced it was involved in a £175 million deal with Tesco. The two companies created a new jointly owned company called BLT that bought £82 million and £93 million of property from Tesco and British Land respectively.

British Land, the UK's third largest property conglomerate, is also one of the front-runners to buy the married quarters owned by the Ministry of Defence for £1.6 billion if and when they are privatised.

Last November, Lord Wolfson, chairman of GUS, said that a strategic review of the company, often seen by the City as a sleeping giant, would take six to nine months and would encompass all areas of the business.



Clive Watson, left, finance director, and David Franks, managing director, toasting another set of good results

Regent Inns stays buoyant

REGENT INNS, the operator of public houses and caf  s, has continued to enjoy buoyant trading conditions. Yesterday it reported a rise in pre-tax profits to £5.99 million, from £3.5 million, in the half-year to January 4.

The company now trades from 73 outlets, with another 12 operated under a management contract. Underlying earnings were 5.54p a share (3.64p) and the interim dividend is increased to 1p (0.65p).

Sell-off by Country Casuals

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

COUNTRY CASUALS, the beleaguered women's wear group, is planning to sell two of its three divisions after being forced yesterday to issue its second profit warning in three months.

Mark Bence, chief executive, said KPMG Corporate Finance is looking for buyers for Elvi, its large-sized women's wear retailer, and for Lerose, its manufacturing di-

vision. The two businesses employ more than 600 people. All that will be left will be the core Country Casuals chain.

The group is confident of finding buyers and does not expect any closures. After the sale, it plans to slim its board structure — there are currently three operating company boards and one holding company board.

Yesterday's warning said

pre-tax profit for the year ending January 25 will be "not less than £100,000". In November it said profits would be at least £1 million, compared with £249,000 a year earlier.

Trading went well during October and in the first half of November, but then fell away. Subsequent heavy discounting hit margins which, in turn, hit operating profits. Country Casual shares fell 7p to 73½p.

Gas finding boosts Australian project

THE North West Shelf Project, Australia's biggest resource venture in which BP has a one-sixth share, yesterday underpinned its proposed A\$6 billion (about £3 billion) expansion with the news that proven gas reserves at the site had increased by 60 per cent, to 24.4 trillion cubic feet (writes Rachel Bridge).

The expansion is aimed at the growing market in South East Asia where demand is

forecast to rise from 50 million tonnes to 80 million by 2003. Shares of Woodside Petroleum, the project operator, jumped 18 cents, to \$9.30, on the Australian stock exchange. Woodside said that total proven gas reserves at the site had risen from 15.2 trillion cubic feet to 24.4 trillion cubic feet over the past year, while the probable gas reserves had increased from 18.4 trillion cubic feet to 27.4 trillion.

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|--------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|
| Belgium (BF) | 13698 | 45% | 7504 | 3638 | 2293 | 5328 |
| France (FF) | 1365 | 55% | 1091 | 571 | 331 | 502 |
| Luxembourg (LF) | 9184 | 51% | 5040 | 2635 | 1627 | 2611 |
| Netherlands (DF) | 778 | 45% | 428 | 224 | 130 | 188 |
| Switzerland (SF) | 808 | 35% | 445 | 222 | 155 | 177 |
| Rest of Europe (R) | 474 | n/a | 237 | 118.5 | 78.04 | 130 |

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32 UNIT TRUST PRICES

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Shares recoup early losses

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

| 1997 | High | Low | Open | Close | Change | % | PE |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|------|------|
| ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| BANKS | | | | | | | |
| Barclays | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| HSBC | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Midland | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| NatWest | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Paragon | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Prudential | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| TSB | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Windsor | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| BREWERS, PUBS & REST | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIAL | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| ENGINEERING VEHICLES | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| FOOD MANUFACTURERS | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| BUILDING & CONSTRUCT | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| ELECTRICITY | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| ELECTRONIC & ELECT | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| HOUSEHOLD GOODS | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| ENGINEERING | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| INSURANCE | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| CHEMICALS | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| DISTRIBUTORS | | | | | | | |
| AB InBev | 48.50 | 47.50 | 48.00 | 47.50 | -0.50 | -1.0 | 15.2 |
| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
| Sanofi-Sintelabo | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Unilever | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |

| 1997 | High | Low | Open | Close | Change | % | PE |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|------|------|
| ENGINEERING VEHICLES | | | | | | | |
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| Carlsberg | 12.50 | 12.20 | 12.40 | 12.30 | -0.10 | -0.8 | 12.5 |
| Heineken | 15.50 | 15.20 | 15.40 | 15.30 | -0.10 | -0.6 | 14.8 |
| Interbrew | 25.50 | 25.00 | 25.40 | 25.10 | -0.30 | -1.2 | 16.5 |
| Orkla | 18.50 | 18.20 | 18.40 | 18.30 | -0.10 | -0.5 | 13.5 |
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THEATRE

Kathryn Hunter has always been obsessed with Lear. Now she's the first woman in Britain to play him



FILM

Bernard Levin on surviving the cinematic torture chamber that is Kenneth Branagh's four-hour *Hamlet*

THE TIMES ARTS



CD CHOICE

Building a Library recommends Leonard Bernstein's recording of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*



TOMORROW

Jane Asher stars as the world of journalism comes under the spotlight in Doug Lucie's *The Shallow End*

He'll be out of Scotland afore ye

Blackden Tron Theatre, Glasgow

In the city there are eight million stories. In the countryside there are a whole lot more, each with a throbbing heart big enough to match any urban landscape. For it is stories that fuel the fire of country life — that is country life as in real life, where the nearest mecca is neither Ibiza nor New York. "Not even Aberdeen," as one character puts it in Duncan McLean's new play for the enterprising but resource-strapped Castle-milk People's Theatre.

The village of the title is a one-horse town that follows the country code of minding your own business while being on intimate terms with everybody else's. Periods of prolonged isolation are doled out by outside forces, not least by the wax jacket and tweed-wearing "white settlers".

Given the sense of solitude, it is fitting that the story, adapted by McLean from his own novel, is told largely through a series of dovetailing monologues which complete the jigsaw left behind by its unseen protagonist, Patrick, who looked set to be one of life's passengers. Until he disappeared.

The recent vogue for putting contemporary Scottish novels on stage has often given only a cursory nod towards their new form. McLean is canny and more imaginative than most, though. He is also a more experienced dramatist. So where the book is narrated by Patrick, the stage version is set a few days after the book finishes, seeking to shed new light on Patrick's vanishing by delivering it in retrospect, and showing the effect it has had

on the community he has left behind.

Community is the key word, for in feeling he has nothing to offer or gain from Blackden, Patrick exposes the divided loyalties of a generation towards what they know as home as well as to what has tempted them away. Away to where, nobody knows, not Patrick's boss, nor Shona, the girl who could have changed his mind if he had only changed hers. His best mate, Brian, could see some unspecified change in Patrick, but only Heather, the hardened Scottish Nationalist, hints at the reasons behind the disappearance.

At first glance, Peter Mackie Burns's production seems starkly untheatrical, yet as the monologues become shorter, accelerating Patrick's impending escape, it becomes clear this is a mystery of epic proportions. Performances are patchy, with only Jennifer Black's Heather having a full sense of controlled stillness. Louise Laidlaw as Shona and Paul Mutch as Brian are far too prone to pacing, but maybe they, too, are looking for a way out.

The play's nearest relative is Brian Friel's *Faith Healer*, and although lacking that play's precision, this is nevertheless a mild call to wake up, shake up, and get real. For Blackden is no weekend retreat for picnickers. It is for life.

NEIL COOPER

Woman who would be king



Stamina: Kathryn Hunter was on stage throughout in *Complicite's* *Foe* last year

Kathryn Hunter has been known to trail old men into Leicester supermarkets. This was during an early phase in her preparation for the role of King Lear when, she confesses, "I felt too small" — she is all of 5ft. "Then, one lunch hour, there was a turning point. I saw this old man, about my size, in his eighties, and I followed him into Iceland." She jumps up, diminutive in black, and becomes the old man, walking with measured dignity around the Haymarket Theatre's hospital room. "I thought, if they all parted before him now, he could be Lear." The experience helped her to jettison clichés about the physical expression of power and authority: "The point is, Lear is big in spirit."

Hunter is probably the first woman to play Lear professionally, certainly in this country, although there have been several female Hamlets (including Frances de la Tour in 1979), and Fiona Shaw's boyish Richard III, first seen at the National Theatre, is about to reach the television screen. Sybil Thorndike played the Fool in a production of *Lear* at the Old Vic, and Linda Kerr Scott turned the same role into a display of acrobatics at Stratford in 1990. To John Wood's *Lear*, but the title role was not only male and octogenarian, but a symbol of authoritarianism and disappointed fatherhood — isn't this too much of a challenge for a woman still in her thirties?

As she enters the final week of rehearsals, Hunter admits: "Initially I felt panic. There seemed a huge taboo, but it fell away as we rehearsed. To be honest, Lear feels more familiar to me than some female parts. He's not just a great giant of a man, but an expression of the human spirit."

A few minutes in conversation with Hunter and doubt begin to fade. Small she may be and, offstage, definitely feminine, but she has a riveting presence and an extraordinary voice — deep, resonant,

THEATRE:
Heather Neill
meets the actress
who is getting
ready to make
history as a
female *Lear*

even growly. Anyone who saw her play the cruel, imperious Clara in *Complicite's* *The Visit* at the National Theatre (for which she won an Olivier Award in 1991) will know that she can dominate a stage with no trouble at all. And in *The Striker*, Caryl Churchill's shape-changing piece, Hunter effortlessly became a series of different characters, of all ages and both sexes. Her stamina is not in question either: she was on stage throughout for her role as the castaway Susan in *Complicite's* touring *Poe*, a version of the *Crucible* story co-directed by Marcello Magni, who is the Fool in this production.

I was Helena Kaut-Howson, the award-winning Polish-born director, who invited her to play *Lear*. Rehearsals have been going on for a month and, by now, Hunter is seeing *Lear's* world from his point of view: "He thinks he is a god, but excessive and extreme as he is in this, he is just as ferocious in his quest to understand what is a human being. I admire him because he has the courage to go into the storm. He's a fighter. My feminine sense goes more easily to guilt, to emotional softness; he fights."

"He wants to find out: what is a man? What does a human being need? Does life have any meaning if you break connections with others? He doesn't talk about Cordelia in the storm, but, in experiencing rejection, he

must realise that he also rejected her. You can see his behaviour as arrogance. It's a double thing: grandiose and delusory on one level, but on another, the mark of a huge imagination." Nevertheless, Lear's so-called insights are not, she says, "lovely, enlightening new: love is better than hate, human justice is corruptible."

"Shakespeare seems to be saying of this world, 'There are no rules, no certainties. There is no security of a Christian salvation.' The play is not about redemption, but about love and, even when it's there, love doesn't secure peace and harmony."

Famous for the physical quality of her acting, Hunter intends to take care not to distract from Shakespeare's language. "I'm playing him as an old man — definitely not Queen Lear — but without overcharacterising age or gender. The language can initially be alienating for the audience, but the images and reverberations are extraordinary."

Kaut-Howson says: "We had to decide what is our way in? We needed a starting-point. It is like a massive stone cut a path in and you reveal things; cut a different one and you reveal others."

There was, in fact, a highly personal and emotional starting point. The director's mother died about eight months ago. "Her preoccupations were the same as Lear's: obsessions: what makes humanity devour itself? What causes wars? She had lived through wars in Europe and the Middle East. At the end she was still herself, as Lear is still himself, only more so."

"Kathryn became a kind of medium. There are few other British, indeed world, actors who can encompass the diversity of notes in *Lear*. There is tragedy and comedy — grotesque, Bosch-like comedy. With Kathryn, drama is always present in her comedy and comedy in her drama."

King *Lear* opens on Friday at the Haymarket, Leicester (0116-253 9797)

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| Tokyo | £3,788 | £1,049 |

Hamlet – the bottom line

SECOND OPINION: Four hours in *Elsinore* leave Bernard Levin numb in the extremes

I have of late — but wherefore I know not — lost all mirth, forgone all custom of exercise, and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory.

The reason is plain to see: I have just sat through four hours and a bit in Stygian darkness, with only one pause for relief (in both senses), and that only 15 minutes long. You ask what torture chamber I have fallen into? I reply, groaning and rubbing my sore bottom — Kenneth Branagh's complete film *Hamlet*. And when I say complete, I mean it (groaning again), for every word of Shakespeare's play is spoken. And what is so groan-making about Shakespeare's glorious words? Nothing, nothing at all. The groaning comes in Branagh's film.

I have no quarrel with the updating: Shakespeare has been played in every time. But Branagh seems to believe that if he hires a couple of hundred famous players and sprinkles them over some monumentally awful scene, he will be in the running for President. And I am hardly joking: to hire such great players as John Gielgud and John Mills, and then give them no words to speak, looks like half-barny childish vanity. And still on the vanity side, Branagh has roped in Richard Attenborough for the minute part of the English Ambassador, for the perfectly ridiculous part of Hecuba. Branagh has called in Judi Dench, no less, also to play a part that has no words to speak: Rosemary Harris, with nothing but the Player Queen, Gérard Depardieu as Reynaldo, or... Charlton Heston, Jack Lemmon, Charlie Chaplin, the Prince of Wales, the Sex Pistols, Art Garfunkel, Nigel Dwyer, Frank Bruno, O.J. Simpson — all those poor people in Albania who have been swindled, and of course Ned Sherrin. Well, it seemed like it.

But what about my bottom? I was not joking when I said that the four hours of agony I endured were not worth the money, and I got in free. But the first fear came from the very first words of Shakespeare: "Who's there?" and the reply "Nay, answer me."

stand and unfold yourself". You and I would expect those familiar words from Bernardo and Francisco, and there they were: but for Branagh it was not enough — he had to have Bernardo and Francisco hurl themselves to the ground, crashing their pikes to the floor in case the enemy (what enemy?) had taken over.

A trifle. But it was also an omen. An omen that told us that we were going to have huge quantities of noise. Noise and heavy breathing, shouting and yelling, smashing the furniture, with hardly a square inch of glass left over, until I thought I would burst, swearing.

Sometimes I thought that Branagh believed he was on a real stage, and all those people were three-dimensional. Would that they had been. Had nobody told Branagh that Shakespeare does not go well in film? There is something dangerous in the flatness of film Shakespeare, and when it goes on for four hours without a stop — well, my bottom, oh my bottom! (That reminds me. There are three or four flashes of real beautiful nakedness in the film, whether Kate Winslet — she was the Ophelia — did it, or a girl hired for the purpose I do not know. But I wish I did.)

Anyway, even Branagh was from time to time stymied, and had to dance to a tiresome tune. Two or three times, the

screen, and it is a huge screen, was entirely filled by a pair of lips (visitors of a delicate nature, close your eyes) together with teeth, gums and gullets. I never discovered what all that was to mean.

A right summer, then? Not entirely, of course. There were good things too: how could something so enormous not turn out a reasonable quantity of goodies? First, as I think everyone will agree, was the superb Derek Jacobi as Claudius, and running him a close second comes Richard Briers as Polonius. Few Poloniuses can resist the lure of making Polonius far too absurd, but Briers's Polonius is perfectly balanced. Branagh himself was not at all bad, but a man who is trying to make an entire four-hour, every-word play and play in it can hardly scale the heights.

In the end, I gave it my greatest accolade: my bum had stopped aching.

A guide to the best available recordings, presented with Radio 3

MAHLER'S DAS LIED VON DER ERDE

Reviewed by Edward Seckerson

Das Lied von der Erde has been described as "a yin-yang symphony", a symphony of songs, a song of two singers and of two cultures. Chinese poetry, Vietnamese sensibility. But the philosophy of Yin and Yang — negative and positive, dark and light, feminine and masculine — is at the heart of everything Mahler wrote. *Das Lied von der Erde* seeks and finds balance and harmony in contradiction. It's about endings and beginnings, loss and affirmation, decay and renewal, the bitterness of dying, the ecstasy of being alive.

Which makes it elusive, now and forever. The tenor role is problematic — particularly in the defiant opening movement "The Drinking Song of Earth's Sorrow" — requiring a lyric voice with weight and reach. A Siegmund as opposed to a Tristan. Except, of



course, that in a recording it is possible to contrive a favourable balance for a lighter than ideal voice. Fritz Wunderlich, in the Klemperer recording on EMI, was just such a voice, and his performance has become something of a benchmark. But glorious though it is, the world weariness and/or irony of the texts somewhat elude him. Not so the wily veteran Julius Pászák in the classic Bruno Walter recording on Decca.

This remains one of the treasures of the gramophone, not least for the presence of Kathleen Ferrier. Just the sound of that voice touches

something deep inside us. Ferrier may not sing it as well as Christa Ludwig for Klemperer (EMI) or Janet Baker for Haitink (Philips) or Leppard (BBC Classics), and she doesn't lay bare the text as does Brigitte Fassbaender for Giulini (DG). But each of these great singers is to some extent compromised by her conductor. Walter, Mahler's disciple, is completely at one with the temperament of the music. Only Leonard Bernstein (Decca 452 301-2, mid-price, £9.99) unlocks its volatility as he does. He, too, has the advantage of Mahler's orchestra, the Vienna Philharmonic, though his preference here is for the baritone option — the poet as opposed to mother earth personified. That Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau gives one of the most illuminating, heartstopping performances of his distinguished career is enough to sway me in Bernstein's favour. But you must have Ferrier too.

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● Next Saturday on Radio 3 (5pm): Debussy's *Violin Sonata*



■ VISUAL ART 1

A new exhibition at the Tate promises to spread the name of Lovis Corinth beyond his native Germany



■ VISUAL ART 2

The National Gallery in Washington celebrates Ford Madox Brown and the Victorians

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ VISUAL ART 3

The wild fantasy of Patrick O'Reilly's bizarre machines is showcased in a new London show



■ VISUAL ART 4

... and the glowing and colourful Middle Eastern canvases of Samira Abbassy go on view in Cork Street

VISUAL ART: A German painter who defies categorisation; Victorian art in America; plus other shows

Quick change artist

The Tate's Lovis Corinth show pays overdue tribute to a stubborn individualist, says Richard Cork

When Lovis Corinth suffered a severe stroke in the winter of 1911, his career as a leading German artist seemed to be over. Left with a partial paralysis hampering both his hands, he found himself unable to paint for almost a year. At the age of only 53, the future looked intolerable.

But Corinth was a fighter. Prone to depression and a heavy drinker, he nevertheless forced himself to work. And the style he developed, far wilder and more openly impressionist than before, ensured that his final 14 years were his finest. This plays a decisive part in explaining why Germany now ranks him as an outstanding painter.

In Britain, by contrast, he remains almost unknown. Although London gave the young artist his first significant acclaim when the Royal Academy awarded him a bronze medal in 1894, he has never been granted a substantial exhibition here. So the Tate Gallery's full-scale retrospective, opening on Thursday after a major European and American tour, should prove a landmark event.

Why has he been so neglected? Part of the answer may lie in a long-standing English resistance to German art. Even today the most revered German painters, from Caspar David Friedrich to Max Beckmann, are poorly represented by British galleries. Another stumbling-block may well be the convulsive change which Corinth's art underwent. He spans two centuries, and his early painting could hardly be further removed from the images he produced in audacious old age. His career as a whole lacks an easily graspable identity. Never content to settle for an acceptable formula, he produced an energetic and fiercely ambitious body of work punctuated with surprises.

Just how capable the young Corinth was of painting with academic skill is proved by his first surviving self-portrait in oils. Executed between 1887 and the following year, when he was approaching his thirtieth birthday, it is a small, yet penetrating image. Sporting an extravagant mustache, the correctly dressed artist looks sober and intent. The picture may have been painted in Berlin, where Corinth tried to establish himself, but he had yet to find his individual voice.

His father's death in 1889 assured Corinth of a substantial private income. He settled in Munich, and soon became promi-

nent among the young dissidents. But Corinth's work could not be described as single-minded. He dived, confusingly, from Impressionist-inflected views of woodland and the prospect from his studio windows to grand figure compositions spiced with sensuality and satire.

The most prophetic paintings, in terms of his future development, were small canvases based on abattoirs and butchers' shops. Their lack of obvious refinement shocked some viewers; even one supportive critic confessed that "sometimes one is tempted not to look for fear of having to smell what one sees".

For the moment, though, he failed to pursue the implications of painting as a form of slaughter. Maybe he enjoyed himself too much in Munich, frequenting bacchanalian balls and indulging in the raucous drinking that eventually helped to undermine his health.

The painting which really established his reputation, a large composition inspired by Oscar Wilde's notorious play *Salome*, is filled with salacious aggression. While the bare-breasted seductress leans over the Baptist's severed head and pushes his left eye open with a jewelled finger, the leering executioner looks on still clasp his blood-smudged sword. Flagrantly provocative in its spicing of lechery and violence, the picture won Corinth immediate acclaim when he exhibited it in Berlin in 1900. The success persuaded him to move to the city the following year.

Corinth thrived in Berlin, winning critical admiration, selling well and becoming with his new wife a darling of society. So the blow delivered by his stroke in December was doubly devastating. For a prolific artist who had rejoiced in his own inventiveness and dynamic facility, the frustration must have been appalling. Physical debilitation engendered a grave spiritual crisis, and he became haunted by terrible dreams.

When he finally managed to resume painting, the outcome was a monumental, terrifying expression of all his pent-up misery and rage. He called this nightmarish canvas *The Blinded Samson*, but it is in reality an anguished self-portrait. Edging forward with manacled hands, and blood still streaming from his gouged eye-sockets, the helpless figure is forced



"Flagrantly provocative in its spicing of lechery and violence": *Salome, First Version* (1899) was the work that established Lovis Corinth's reputation in Berlin

to stoop and stumble. At the same time, though, Samson's determination should not be underestimated. He is still defiantly set on struggle, not acceptance of defeat. Corinth was equally obstinate. To paint a picture as forceful as *The Blinded Samson* after a year of paralysis was an extraordinary feat. Crude it may have appeared after the virtuosity of his previous work, but the urgently applied brushstrokes have a raw power.

Like many Germans, Corinth greeted the advent of the First World War with patriotic defiance. But only a year later he painted an old man in armour, helmet doffed and leaning heavily on his lance as if exhausted by the conflict already. Even so, he did not allow his country's humiliation to affect his own obstinate ebullience. He and his wife built a house in Upper Bavaria with a view of the waters of

Walchense which prompted the ageing artist to embark on a rapturous series of lakeside images over the next six years.

Despite his love of Rembrandt and Rubens, the old man was reinventing his style with a freshness akin to the Expressionist generation. That is why the Nazis branded him an evil influence. The boldness of Corinth's late paintings was unacceptable to the Fascists, who suppressed many of his major canvases.

Mercifully, the artist himself did not live to suffer from their purges. In 1925 Corinth died of lung inflammation in Amsterdam. But his reputation has continued to grow, and the Tate retrospective will ensure that his stubbornly individual achievement is honoured in Britain at last.

● Lovis Corinth at the Tate Gallery, London SW1 (0171-887 8000) to May 4

■ MUCH of Patrick O'Reilly's new show comes from a showing in Dublin where some of the animated pieces were so enthusiastically set in motion by child visitors that figures have had to be replaced. But there is still a whole lot of shakin' going on. The little figures in glass compartments in *Quiet Desperation* twitch and judder disturbingly, and elsewhere parts start to move when you least expect it. The comments on the human condition have a certain tonic asperity, but, like *Gulliver's Travels*, even O'Reilly's nastiest pieces can, looked at with child-like candour, come over as innocent fancies. Mayor Gallery, 22a Cork Street, W1 (0171-734 3558) Mon-Fri 10.30am-5.30pm, Sat 10am-1pm, until March 19.

AROUND THE GALLERIES

■ THE word "colourful" tends to come up a lot in relation to art of vaguely Middle Eastern, vaguely Islamic origin. It is often a tactful way of saying "garish". But Samira Abbassy, Iranian by birth, British by upbringing, and cosmopolitan in experience, has the true colourist's ability to make canvases glow with unexpected and daring harmonies, without settling over-delicate souls adrift. If you want to be transported to the other side of the rainbow, Abbassy is the painter to do it. Mercury Gallery, 26 Cork Street, W1 (0171-734 7800) Mon-Fri 10am-5.30pm, Sat 10am-12.30pm, until March 1.

■ THE Piccadilly Gallery has long been known as a specialist in Symbolist art, so the current exhibition of Belgian Drawings 1880-1930 should come as no surprise. The half-century in question was the heyday of Belgian art, and most of its practitioners were touched by the Symbolist movement. Several of the best-known are featured here, including Ensor, Khnopff, Delvaux and Spilliaert. It is interesting, too, to encounter some later, more modern artists like Maurice Langskens and Anto Carie. Piccadilly Gallery, 16 Cork Street, W1 (0171-629 2875) Mon-Fri 10am-5.30pm, Sat 10.30am-1pm, until March 7.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

American home for Victorian values

Cita Stelzer on how Washington is celebrating 19th-century British art

The National Gallery's exhibition of more than 60 Victorian paintings (7 from the Tate) comes at a time when America is in a period of self-congratulatory exuberance — irrational exuberance, according to Federal Reserve Bank chairman Alan Greenspan — that is truly Victorian itself. "Confident, forward looking, expansive" is how the press release from the National Gallery characterises the Victorians; there could be no better description of full-employment America today.

Americans are new admirers of what Gertrude Himmelfarb calls "Victorian virtues" and Margaret Thatcher came to call Victorian values. Produced by Himmelfarb and others, Americans are coming to see in a rebirth of the virtues of Victorian Britain — hard work, self-reliance, shame, and family — the solution to many of America's social problems.

Ford Madox Brown's great painting, *Work*, on loan from the Manchester City Art Galleries, most unabashedly shows the viewer what it is that the British admired. All of the remembered best of British society is captured in this painting: the self-esteem that

comes from honest, get-your-hands-dirty work; the value of the individual; deep religious convictions (a proper young lady clutching a tract); and even, all for the same price, Thomas Carlyle, looking on with approval. Brown elsewhere refers to Carlyle as the "brainworker", equating the elite intellectual with the navy digging a trench to ensure Hampshire's water supply. All in a single picture.

Social responsibility is also well represented: some of the rich in *Work* are actively holding Temperance pamphlets. Several other paintings in this exhibition attest to the importance to the Victorians of the combination of individual and social responsibility. Herkimer's *Eventide*, painted in 1877 and borrowed from Liverpool's Walker Art Gallery, draws us into a female workhouse where indigent elderly women receive housing and food in exchange for work: call it *Workfare*.



Ford Madox Brown's *Work*, highlight of the show at Washington's National Gallery

depicting a situation in which the safety net was adequate, but not so generous as to encourage permanent reliance on it. Herkimer's bleak interior is not one that encourages the workers to make the workhouse a permanent dwelling.

Among the few portraits is the subtle and mysterious full-length portrait of Carlyle by Whistler (from the Glasgow Museums), Malcolm Warner, the British curator of this

exhibition and curator of paintings and sculpture at the Yale Centre for British Art, says that Carlyle's "religion of work" embodies many of the ideals of Victorian Britain. Carlyle, the catalogue tells us, "tried to salvage the idea of... a social order in the face of the more sceptical, democratic, and materialistic trends of modern British life".

The other portrait of singular interest is of the still-undiscredited, then-Royal

Family by Winterhalter. Like many Victorian pictures, this depiction of the Duke of Wellington (in his grand uniform) presenting a gift to one of Queen Victoria's infant sons combines many elements: importance of the family, the monarchy and the army. Just in case the viewer were to forget the role of progress, one of the central elements of Victorian life, the Crystal Palace, looms in the background. Victorian painting has long

been criticised and ridiculed for being, among other things, moralising in its representations. But these days, at least in Britain and America, morality, individual responsibility, the dignity of work and the virtues of dignified behaviour are all once again in style. Civility is trendy; so, too, is Victorian modesty.

Some of these pictures are moralising: William Holman Hunt's spectacular *Awakening Conscience* probably has had more metaphors read into it than most. But the realism and the morality tales are there to be read by 20th-century viewers, just as they were indeed read by Ruskin, who, in a letter to this newspaper (cited in the catalogue) said: "There will not be found one [painting] as powerful as this to meet full in the front the moral evil of the age."

The mounting of this monumental survey is an indication of the resurgence of interest in things Victorian, even among us colonialists. The exhibition will not travel. So, as President Johnson liked to say, "y'all come". It's easier and probably cheaper to get to Washington to see these treasures than it is to trek around Britain to their widely scattered but properly permanent homes.

● The Victorians — British Painting 1837-1901 is at the National Gallery, Washington DC (202 737 4215) until May 11

EN

"Mozartian triumph"
Daily Telegraph
"gorgeous to look at... and a verbal triumph"
Financial Times

February 20/28
March 4/8 (11/13)
18/20 at 7.00pm
March 15 at 8.30pm
Tickets from £8.50

Box Office
0171 632 8300

Figaro's Wedding



Mozart

هكذا من لامل



CHOICE 1
Corin Redgrave
heads a fine cast
in *The General*
From America
VENUE: Opens tonight
at the Barbican Pit



CHOICE 2
Jenny Seagrove
stars in
the thriller
The Dark Side
VENUE: Tonight at the
Thorncliffe, Leatherhead

THE TIMES ARTS



OPERA
As good as new:
Graham Vick's
staging of
Figaro's Wedding
returns to
the Coliseum



CONCERT
At the Festival Hall
Pierre Boulez
launches the
BBC's three-year
retrospective of
20th-century music

LONDON
CANDIDELLA: Matthew Hall's production for City Ballet of London, featuring superbly cast, hand-crafted costumes and a score of songs, opens tonight and runs until Saturday. Whistledown, The Broadway SW19 (0181-540 0352). Evening performances, 7.30pm; mat. Thurs and Sat, 2.30pm.

THE GENERAL FROM AMERICA
Jenny Seagrove and Corin Redgrave head a fine cast in the Richard Nelson play. City of London, EC2 (0171-638 8811). Opens tonight, 7pm. Tickets: £10-15.

HARD TIMES
Philip Maudie, Fionnula Flanagan and Jonathan Newlin in Sue Parnow's touring production for Good Company, adapted from Dickens by Dennis Saunders. Next dates: Norwich, Norfolk; Eastbourne, East Sussex; Richmond Green (0181-940 0088). Tonight Sat, 7.45pm; mat. Wed and Sat 2.30pm. Until Feb 22.

ELSEWHERE
CAMBRIDGE
English Theatre Opera is giving its first production with a new production of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*. The Marriage of Figaro (Tonight, Thurs and Sat), directed by Stephen Medford with designs by Barbara Bywater. Box office: 01223 350000. Tickets: £10-15. Opens tomorrow, 7.45pm. Thurs Mon-Fri 7.45pm; Sat, 8pm, mat. Wed, 2.30pm. Sat, 2.30pm. Until Feb 22.

MANCHESTER
Michael Penner conducts the Russian National Orchestra in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 4*. The Russian National Orchestra (Tonight, 7.30pm).

Perfect nuptial harmony

GRAHAM VICK'S production has not always fared happily in revival, but last Friday's performance showed it in what is surely its best state since it was new in 1991. Now in the care of Emma Jenkins, the comedy came up as bright and sharp as Richard Hudson's deftly colourful decor, which wears extremely well. And it is comedy arising from the text, in this case the Sams translation, which wears equally well. Jenkins treats Vick's one doubtful



Burnished marital comedy: Janice Watson, Jonathan Summers, Rebecca Caine and Robert Poulton

idea — the lumbering "night for day" conceit in the last act — with great tact, nudging it along without appearing to sabotage it.

The cast is nicely balanced, though Janice Watson's Countess cannot help dominating it, so beautiful is her singing, so commanding her impersonation — a long-breathed *Dove* song was a moment to treasure. Her attitude to Nerys Jones's wide-eyed Cherubino is openly amused rather than solicitous, but there is not much risk involved: when this Cherubino tries to tumble her in the garden, he goes about it in quite the wrong way — so much for sex education in 18th-century Seville. Robert Poulton is one of those people who makes the very act of singing seem the most natural thing in the world: his sly but charmingly stupid Count is just about perfect as an impersonation.

There are two really lively performers below stairs: the mercurial Rebecca Caine (Susanna) saving her best vocal-ly for a sweetly phrased *Deh vieni* — love song rather than big tease — and Jonathan Summers (Figaro), naughtily mixing some *Dent* in with the Sams and not quite disguising the fact that the role lies uncomfortably low for a Verdi baritone. He will doubtless tighten the focus in the last act as the run progresses.

John Connell's lugubrious, wonder-fully sung Bartolo, John Graham Hall's Basilio (a stick insect in shock-ingly pink) and Richard Van Allan's crisply projected Antonio are absolute-ly first-rate. Thora Einarsson could perhaps mix a little vinegar into her cute Barbarina, just as Anne Mason already does in her warmly maternal Marcellina.

In the pit, Nicholas Kok encourages an agile, fleet-footed Mozart sound from the band and some nice vocal embellishments. His speeds are brisk, with moments of knife-edge ensemble, but the action is pretty knife-edge after all. The performance romps along. A hugely satisfying and enjoyable revival.

RODNEY MILNES

TODAY'S CHOICE
A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Massey

Passage (01223 303333) Tonight-Sat 7.45pm

CHOICE 1
CANDIDELLA: Opened Arred Hughes conducts the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in music to inspire and excite in this year's ST Martin's Proton. The programme includes Dvorak's *Symphony No. 9*, Tchaikovsky's *Suite for Violoncello and Piano*, and a series of 20th-century inspired songs. St Martin's Proton, The Hayes (01223 303333). Tonight-Sat, 7.45pm.

CHOICE 2
LEATHERHEAD: Jenny Seagrove stars in Michael Penner's psychological thriller, *The Dark Side*. Caroline, the wife of multi-millionaire Peter Walker, is unable to remember the events leading up to her husband's murder. The truth slowly emerges as events unfold. Directed by David Butler. Thorncliffe, Leatherhead (0171-638 8811). Tonight-Sat, 7.45pm. Thurs Mon-Fri 7.45pm; Sat, 8pm, mat. Wed, 2.30pm. Sat, 2.30pm. Until Feb 22.

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RODNEY MILNES

CONCERTS: Thrilling to some murderous modern urges; plus Schubert behind closed doors

Stravinsky for all seasons

IF A marketing agency — or in this case Radio 3 — were looking for a way to sell 20th-century music, Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* is the answer to their dreams. It has sex, violence, a universal storyline, a clear mission statement. It has the sort of invasive, visceral rhythms that can infect and jolt a whole audience. It is disruptive, but seductively so: after the *Dances of the Earth* in Boulez's performance with the BBC Symphony Orchestra on Sunday night, enjoyment was mixed with a very English embarrassment; people don't know what to do with their physical excitement, guilty at being swept along by the music's murderous urges.

It also has the beauty of brevity: life, death and rebirth, in just half an hour. All this, and *The Rite of Spring* remains an inviolable masterpiece, a work which changed music forever.

So it was the only possible opener to Radio 3's three-year

The boy wonder

Bostridge: It can wound a single word to the quick: an "ade" or "farewell" painfully dislocated by Schubert in an artful harmonic sidestep, or aching as it sighs up into the highest part of the voice.

Bostridge focuses above all on Schubert's melody: to hear and recreate the entire melodic "conceit" of each song and to taste the harmonic underlay which directs it. This frees the voice to express every nuance of irony which Schubert also finds in this cycle.

His accompanist, Malcolm Martineau, was vividly sensitive to the shifting weights and measures of one of the most effective Schubert voices in Europe today.

NEW RELEASES
CONSPIRATORS OF PLEASURE
Eye-catching excursion into people's private obsessions from Czech surrealist Jan Svankmajer. KCA Cinema (0171-530 3847).

PRINCE CREATURES (PG) Broad comedy in an English class from John Schlesinger. With Kenneth Cranley, John Wood, John Wood, John Wood, John Wood. KCA Cinema (0171-530 3847).

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD (PG) A chilling and disturbing film from the BBC. With Kenneth Cranley, John Wood, John Wood, John Wood, John Wood. KCA Cinema (0171-530 3847).

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BBCSO/Boulez Festival Hall

retrospective of 20th-century music. *Sounding the Century*, if not to their Stravinsky festival, *Rites of Spring*, for this, *The Nightingale* in its opera version was chosen. Stravinsky's "lyric tale" based on Andersen's fairy-tale has the advantage of enacting the composer's sudden progress from student of Rimsky-Korsakov to the composer of *The Firebird*, *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*.

But while the orchestral colouring springs into exotic life in the Emperor's palace, it is the first act which is dramatically effective with its mournful fisherman, given a touching performance by Wolfgang Buntin. The action then becomes too telescoped to be convincing, the music ultimately anti-climactic and here sounding a little lacklustre.

Bostridge/Martineau Wigmore Hall

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ART GALLERIES
HAVE YOU LOOKED IN MY WINDOW?
A RUSSIAN DREAM
ROY MILES GALLERY,
23 Bruton Street W1

OPERA & BALLET
COLISEUM 0171 638 8811
ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA
Tonight 7pm
THE ITALIAN GIRL IN ALIERS
Tonight 8pm
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ROYAL OPERA HOUSE 0171 324 4224
Tonight 8pm
THE ITALIAN GIRL IN ALIERS
Tonight 8pm
DER ROSENKAMMER
ROYAL OPERA HOUSE 0171 324 4224
Tonight 8pm

DANCE
SALON DE DANSE
ROYAL OPERA HOUSE 0171 324 4224
Tonight 8pm
THE ITALIAN GIRL IN ALIERS
Tonight 8pm
DER ROSENKAMMER
ROYAL OPERA HOUSE 0171 324 4224
Tonight 8pm

THEATRES
ALBERT THEATRE 0171 416 6722
Tonight 8pm
THE ITALIAN GIRL IN ALIERS
Tonight 8pm
DER ROSENKAMMER
ROYAL OPERA HOUSE 0171 324 4224
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At the Festival Hall
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20th-century music

ony

LAW

Frances Gibb on a damages case that illustrates the shortcomings of civil courts



Stan Wells with wife Hilary. "We heard this noise," he recalls. "One of those cranes was practically coming into our bedroom wall"

Little house of horrors

Last week the Lord Chancellor painted a vision of civil justice at the millennium. Legal services in Britain would no longer be dominated by lawyers, or the courts. Instead, a plethora of other providers will enter the market. The insurance industry in particular will assume a key role in widening access to justice, just as is happening in the health service. Market forces, and the private sector, will increasingly determine what legal services are on offer.

The speech by Lord Mackay of Clashfern to the Consumers' Association mapped out the final phases of the revolution he set in train with the Courts and Legal Services Act 1999. That Act ended the legal profession's monopolies and opened up new ways — such as "no win, no fee" work — of legal services being offered. Now, he sees things going further. Lawyers and others offering legal services will be forced to move to a system of fixed prices quoted "up front". The legal establishment had shown a "reluctance, some might say cultural distaste, for dealing openly and frankly with economic incentives". As a result, Lord Mackay said, they had fostered "perverse incentives" which had made civil justice unaffordable.

Now, Lord Mackay favours further moves towards a system of fixed prices. Lord

Wells's civil justice reforms, with its new "fast track" for claims of up to £10,000, will do this to some extent. Lawyers will have to quote fees in advance and then keep to strict timetables. The Legal Aid Board wants the same approach in big legal-aid civil cases, with lawyers coming each stage of a case.

One result, Lord Mackay predicts, is that fixed pricing will draw in the insurance industry. Insurers could become bulk buyers of lawyers' services on behalf of their

clients, setting quality standards to ensure individuals get a good standard of service. I see no reason why the private litigant should not enjoy the same relationship with an "intelligent purchaser" in the private sector," he says. The vision of wider access to justice is welcome. But it looks a long way off compared with the reality of civil justice — or sometimes injustice — today.

The case of Stan and Hilary Wells is a case in point. It is almost ten years since Mr and Mrs Wells awoke to the crashing of a demolition crane at their home in South Norwood, London. Mr Wells recalls: "We heard this noise and there was one of those cranes practically coming through into our bedroom wall." The adjoining terraced property had deteriorated and was being pulled down. No prior notice was given by the garage owners whose property it was. The Wellses found themselves looking through a gaping hole at the side of their house at the demolition workers.

It was the start of a long-drawn-out fight for damages.

The couple were awarded damages of £29,687, but still have not received a single penny

The removal of the adjacent property structurally weakened the Wellses' own home, caused cracking and gradual deterioration, with extensive damage through damp penetration. Now, nine years later, their home is in a very poor state of repair, with extensive damp, peeling and stained wallpaper. The couple took the garage owners to court. They, in turn, lodged actions against architects and engineers they consulted over the demolition. It was not until May 1996 that the Wellses' case came to court — and only then because it

was separated from the other third-party proceedings, which are still awaiting trial. And even then, the court found that the case was "not well prepared". Amendments, and last-minute production of expert evidence, meant that the case had to be heard on a number of dates over two months. As a result, judgement was also delayed. As the judge put it, the Wellses had been "fiddled". Judge H. M. Crush said: "The failure to identify all areas of expert opinion and to arrange exchange of comprehensive reports well in advance of trial has resulted in a protracted exchange of views expressed largely orally at trial with experts being called to reply."

The Wellses were awarded damages against the defendants of £29,687. That was in May 1996. They have still not received one penny. The defendants appealed and because of the delays, the Wellses were ordered to bear 25 per cent of the costs. Their solicitors, Rowe Radcliffe, have assured them this will not have to come out of their pockets. The firm is sympathetic to the delay as they have suffered. But it points out that had the action not been separated from the allied claims, they might still be waiting for it to be heard.

In the meantime, their damages are being held by the Legal Aid Board (the Wellses were on legal aid) until costs are assessed by the court — a process which can take up to nine months. The couple have no funds in the meantime to repair the house. Mr Wells, who has coronary heart disease, has been forced to give up work as a recruitment manager. Mrs Wells has a clerical job. "Our house is now unsaleable," he says. "We were forced to cash in our endowment policies and my pension to cover some of the costs earlier on — so instead of being in a reasonable position at our time of life we do not have the financial resources that we had saved and planned for. We are paying a mortgage of £68,000 on a house now worth probably £40,000 to £50,000. And having won our case, we still cannot put our home in good order. What price is English justice?"

which has set up a free helpline for people who have suffered loss through buying timeshares from dubious operators. The network acted after Court of Appeal rulings that victims may now be able to claim compensation if their loans were from a British bank or paid by credit card.

Callers on 0800 009911 will be referred to lawyers for a free initial interview.

Pupillage boost

A BAR COUNCIL report into the clearing-house scheme for pupillages, which has been going for a year now, has identified one applicant who received 12 of the coveted offers for pupillages out of just 20 applications. No mean achievement, given that 1,436 of the 1,801 applicants did not get any offers at all in the initial Pacht selection round. The report, by a group led by Stephen Kramer, QC, calls for improvements to the system, which last year failed to allocate 320 of the 348 pupillages on offer. The main recommendation is for more restrictions on the number of pupillages for which applicants can apply, which would have the effect of spreading pupillage offers among more applicants.

SCRIVENOR

STUART & FRANCIS

Labour's legal plans

GEORGE STAPLE, the Serious Fraud Office's outgoing director, is being tipped to take over as Treasury Solicitor — and head of the Government Legal Service — a post traditionally held by a member of the Bar.

It became vacant after the sudden death of Michael Saunders. Labour, meanwhile, is having problems over who might fill its own law-officer posts if it wins power. Again by convention, the post goes to a barrister. The obvious candidate for Attorney-General is the shadow, John Morris, QC. But what of Solicitor-General? Lord Williams of Mostyn would be a good choice but for his peerage. Labour might have to break with tradition and appoint from the upper house.

Settled

MORE THAN half the Bristol & West conveyancing claims against law firms listed for a group hearing at the High Court next week have now settled, according to the Law Society Gazette. Of 85 cases brought by the society against the Solicitors Indemnity Fund, only 35 remain.

The claims arose against solicitors who acted for buyers during the property boom. When the market collapsed, the society had to repossess many properties. The society alleges conveyancing errors and also says law firms should have warned it of any prospective bad risks.

Catty

THE LENGTHS to which clients will go to signal their approval of a law firm's image revamp are quite remarkable. Sue Silvey, Os-

borne Clarke's marketing manager, tells in *Professional Marketing* magazine of a firm's decision to change its corporate identity by creating a sleek big-cat logo.

She writes: "Many clients wrote congratulatory letters including puns which alluded to 'purified vision', 'catatonic', 'cat-chy' and 'fat cats'. Tins of cat food arrived from one contact and fake leopard skin material from another."

Timeshare help

SWIFT JUSTICE from the National Solicitors Network.

Hamming it up

KENNETH BRANAGH, the star of his own new film production of *Hamlet* (left) has a surprise rival. Simon Tracey, a barrister who is also an Equity member, will play the prince in a Bar Theatrical Society version featuring judges, barristers and legal trainees at the Old Hall, Lincoln's Inn, until Saturday, at 7.30pm. Details: Tara McCarthy on 0171-837 8724.



- EXORBITANT FEES 39
- FRENCH REFORM 39

Another fine mess for the Law Society

Tony Girling, the Law Society President, and his associates are now well into the second half of their term of office. Can the establishment repeat the narrow victory achieved by its candidates last year?

Robert Sayer and I will be standing again, and if we can't win this time, we probably can't win at all. The old regime will have shown that despite all the gripings out in the sticks, solicitors are, after all, a conservative bunch and will nearly always opt for the devil they know, whatever his blunderings.

Mr Girling had a difficult hand to play in last summer's election campaign. It was easy enough to bang on about Meares and Sayer as extremists and mavericks. This he and his supporters have been saying from the very start. Many solicitors believed them. Even so, the profession's dislike of Chancery Lane ran so deep that to see the mavericks safely off would take a more inspiring call than "Vote for the old Law Society you know and love. Bring back business as usual".

In the event, the electorate were wooed with the more appealing message. "Buggins is a reformed character. He has learnt his lesson. Trust him again and he will astound you with his deeds." That was the message and it worked.

So what has happened since last July? Is it possible that *Homo Chanceryensis* really has been born again, that those who have toiled so complacently in the great committee mill for so many years have undergone metamorphosis?

Privately, the Bourbons admit that things have not been going well. The Regis computer scandal finally broke in December with the publication of the independent consultants' report. The report presented a devastating picture of mismanagement at the Law Society over a period of years.

Then we had the Solicitors Indemnity Fund (SIF), which within a matter of months twice miscalculated professional indemnity premiums (in the second instance, having to send out a demand for a supplementary contribution). As though this were not enough, the SIF has just announced a further miscalculation. The SIF failed to take sufficient account of the impact of claims arising from conveyancing transactions in the early 1990s and will need to fund these through a hike in premiums that many firms already find crippling.

From the day we joined the Law Society Council, Sayer and I, of course, never stopped complaining that the society was badly managed and was profligate. We kept on saying also that if conveyancers were forced to work at uneconomic rates, they would make mistakes, mistakes for which the whole pro-

fession would eventually pay via the Solicitors Indemnity Fund.

The establishment has reacted predictably to the Regis and SIF debacles. Regis, it is said, was one of yesterday's mistakes, but appropriate lessons have been learnt, etc. etc. So will any of the people involved be disciplined? No, no — that would affect staff morale. What's done is done.

And what about the SIF and the premium increases? Nothing to worry about there, either. The whole matter is being investigated by a committee, which at the time of writing will be made up mainly of present or former directors of the SIF.

Everywhere, indeed, the old habits and the old culture are reasserting themselves. The other day, the council approved the addition of 61 names to the staff head count. Was it only nine months ago that the new Secretary-General was solemnly briefed on the necessity to reduce staff numbers? And then there is the fierce battle being waged over the proposed high street starter kit (one of the "flagship" proposals from Girling's election manifesto). This is a computer package designed for smaller firms and which the Law Society (expert purveyors of IT systems) is trying to create itself. This Son of Regis, it is plain to almost every outside observer, is doomed to failure and to be yet another financial fiasco.

Until the other day, I thought Regis and the rest were mere routine establishment blunders. Now, I begin to think that the Old Guard have a death wish. How else to explain their emancipation of my motion to council that the Law Society, when seeking outside advice, should instruct solicitors rather than trotting off to counsel in its usual fashion? How else does one explain the newly issued "staff guidelines" that would expose junior staff members to "disciplinary sanctions" for giving information of the type that allowed the Regis scandal to see the light of day? How could anyone be so politically crass as to appoint Sayer to the deputy treasurer's post when he began to make waves?

So what will the old 'uns put in their election manifesto? I know. They will tell us what a quiet year it has been: council rallying loyally behind the leadership, no noisy rows, no public denunciations of the current office-holders by their predecessors, the President popping in on the Lord Chancellor, where his representations are heard respectfully and ignored respectfully... business as usual.

● The author is a former president of the Law Society.



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This senior role commands an exceptional salary package and offers career progression throughout the international Fidelity Group. To apply, please forward your CV, in confidence, to Lia Codd, Fidelity Investment Services Limited, Oakhill House, 130 Tonbridge Road, Hildenborough, Kent TN11 9DZ. Fax: 01732 832792.



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Applicants should possess a relevant postgraduate or professional qualification and must have a record of academic leadership through publication and curriculum development. Considerable experience in the HE sector is essential with management experience an advantage. A knowledge of professional legal education in the UK and especially South Wales is desirable. Substantial experience of franchising both in the UK and overseas would be an advantage.

A Professorship may be conferred on an appropriate candidate.

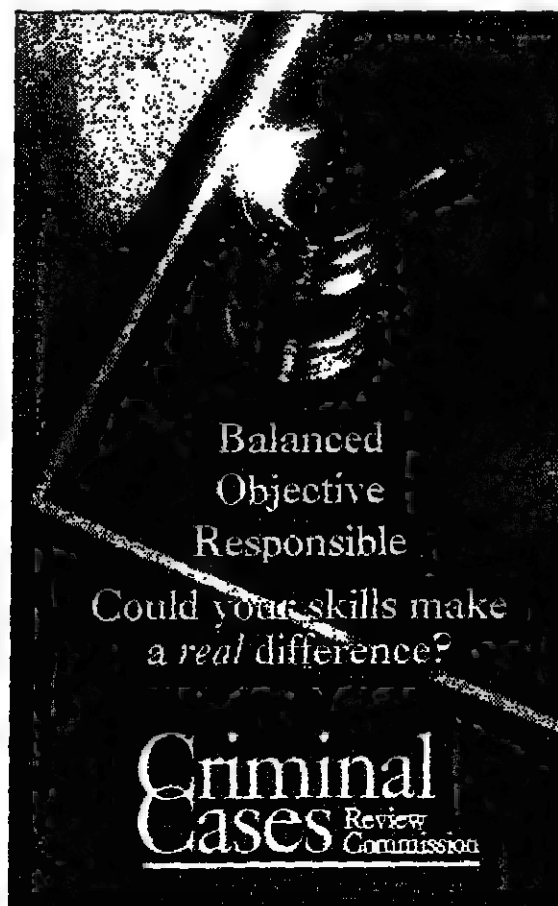
Application forms and further particulars may be obtained from:

Personnel Services,
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Telephone: 01443 482004, (Direct Line - 24 hour service).
If you need to speak to a member of Personnel Services,
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CLOSING DATE: 10 MARCH 1997

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As part of a brand new initiative, these positions offer a unique opportunity to shape and develop the role of Caseworker.

For an information pack and details of how to apply, call Cathy de Wolf on 01886 552720.

Closing date for completed applications: 10th March 1997.

These positions will be initially made on the basis of a three year contract with the possibility of subsequent renewal.

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The heart of British Aerospace's military aircraft, prime contracting and systems integration business is based at Warton in Lancashire. The legal aspects of this complex, fast moving international business demand internal lawyers of the highest calibre. Eight lawyers are currently based at Warton all of whom are expected to demonstrate a proactive commercial approach to their roles, operating as fully integrated members of the business. A requirement for a further three lawyers, to join an existing team has arisen, whose primary responsibilities will include:

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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
Faculty of LawA Readership/Senior Lectureship
and Two Lectureships in Law

The Faculty of Law is proposing to appoint a Reader/Senior Lecturer and two Lecturers with effect from September 1997. In making these appointments the Faculty wishes to build on its strong research activity and strengthen its contribution to the University of London LLM. Appointees may be required to teach at both L.L.B. and L.L.M. level. Applications from those with special expertise in public international law, the law relating to intellectual property, information technology, multi-national or international business and finance, or European Community law will be particularly welcomed.

Applicants should send three copies of their CV (including the names of three referees) to Vivien Fairley, Faculty of Law, UCL, Bentham House, Endsleigh Gardens, London WC1E 6EG, from whom further particulars may be obtained.

The closing date for applications: Friday, 7th March 1997.
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This position will be particularly attractive to a motivated and sympathetic lawyer who understands the needs of both personal injury victims and the Trade Unions and other organisations which give support. Trial experience and an ability to litigate firmly and fairly is crucial.

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